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John Leech

# STANLEY THORN.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "VALENTINE VOX, THE VENTRILOQUIST," &c.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# STANLEY THORN.

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## CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE VENERABLE GENTLEMAN APPEARS  
TO BE CAUGHT AT LAST.

ON the arrival of the family in town, excitement was supplanted by deep and tranquil joy. The soul of Stanley had been fired with ambition. He studied zealously, and attended the House night after night; but, although his return home invariably fluctuated between three and four in the morning, Amelia never felt solitary, never felt dull; for she knew or believed,—which had precisely the same effect,—that the absence of her Stanley was



essential to his success as a statesman, and was happy in the portrayal of the flattering details of a brilliant—a glorious career.

Now, it happened that, in proportion as the intimacy between Amelia and Miss Johnson became closer and more affectionate, the friendship subsisting between Bob and his venerable friend,—both of whom had been handsomely rewarded for their exertions during the contest,—became warmer and more firm. They never appeared to be perfectly comfortable apart : they saw and drank with each other every day with the strict regularity of the sun ; and the venerable gentleman met with so much kind feeling, and withal such distinguished consideration in Stanley's kitchen, that almost every evening he called with the view of playing at the noble game of cribbage with Bob.

It frequently, however, happened that Bob was absent with his master ; and on all such occasions the venerable gentleman had a game with Joanna the cook, and really experienced so much genuine lady-like conduct at her

VIII //

had then been for five years the absolute master of the house. Every member of the establishment feared him. No servant could remain in it three consecutive months, when he happened to be at home, with the exception of a boy, a somnambulist, whom Stanley called Bob, and who had become so attached to him, that he never appeared to be truly happy in his absence. This boy was an immense favourite with Stanley, and a fine time Bob had of it in consequence. The servants avenged Stanley's insults upon him, but not in Stanley's presence ; for, albeit he assumed to himself the inalienable right of horsewhipping him daily if he pleased, if he saw any other creature touch him, or menace him even with a word, he would spring at the assailant like a tiger ; and if he found it impossible to conquer alone, he would make Bob help him ; and if both were unable to manage it then, they would retreat to devise a series of secret assaults, which never by any chance failed to reduce the enemy to submission. He gloried in conquering those whose physical strength was superior to his own ; and, in order to qualify himself for this glory, his

chief delight, when he had no immediate conquest to achieve, was to reduce Bob ostensibly to a mummy, by making him stand before him with the gloves,— of course giving Bob perfectly fair play, although he dared to retreat no more than he would have dared to sell his soul,— until Stanley himself became exhausted, which seldom, indeed, happened until Bob was nearly blind.

Bob used at first to remonstrate against being thus victimised; for really it was not very often that he could see with any pleasurable degree of distinctness, and never by any chance, when Stanley was at home, was he free from a cut lip, a swollen nose, or a black eye; but when he found all remonstrances utterly vain, he very valiantly made up his mind to do his best, and eventually became rather partial to the exercise; for it did occur, occasionally, that he broke fairly through his opponent's guard, and if he succeeded in giving him but a scratch he was content, although in such a case Stanley never dreamt of leaving off until Bob became densely deaf to time.

This was, however, by no means the extent of the penalty inflicted upon Bob: on every such occasion he was discharged. His mistress could endure to see him knocked about,—she could endure to see him pommelled, even to a jelly, with the most exemplary fortitude; but there are at all times bounds to human endurance, and hers could not go one step beyond that. She could not bear to see the sweet features of her own dear Stanley disfigured by even a scratch; and hence, whenever a scratch appeared upon his countenance, Bob, with due promptitude, had his discharge.

On no such occasion, however, did he go beyond the coach-house. He was always reinstated within the hour. Stanley invariably insisted upon his being recalled, and, having gained his point, invariably found him in the carriage asleep.

Now it is a most extraordinary fact—a fact which, however, is not more extraordinary than solemn—that Mrs. Thorn could refuse Stanley nothing, because Stanley would never tolerate a refusal from her lips. He had what he desired, because he would have it; that reason was

in all cases held to be sufficient. It is true she would endeavour to persuade him to forego any demand, the direct tendency of which she conceived to be pernicious ; but eventually such demand, however unreasonable might be its character, was conceded, because the concession was a thing upon which he had set his soul. The worthy alderman, during the last five years of his existence, would have nothing to do with him whatever. He had very horrid suspicions ! Strong efforts had been made to convince him that the beautiful boy was in reality his very image,—that he had the dear alderman's chin, the dear alderman's mouth, the dear alderman's eyes, nose, and spirit ; but the alderman himself either could not or would not perceive those strong points of resemblance which were insisted upon with so much eloquence and warmth ; and hence, although he never went quite so far as to wound the susceptible feelings of his lady by giving direct expression to his views on the point, he unhappily had strong suspicions !

The alderman had tried, however, with desperate zeal to obtain the mastery over Stanley ;

but this he had never been able to accomplish, not even for a day : the failure of every effort indeed had been signal and complete. If in a moment of anger he happened to strike him, Stanley would not only strike him again, but keep up a fierce fire of books, glasses, plates, ornaments, stones,—in short, anything which happened to be at hand. If the alderman locked him up, he would break every table, every chair, and every window in the room ; and if, after a desperate struggle,—and it could only be after a desperate struggle,—he succeeded in tying him down, he would remain on being released, very quietly till tea-time, when (no matter how many friends might be present, in his view the more the merrier, because of the increased quantity of ammunition) he would deliberately take his position at the table, and pelt the worthy alderman with the cups, while explaining very gravely to those around—who, of course were quite shocked—that the whole thing was done in self-defence ; and these highly irregular proceedings he would repeat just as often as he happened to be punished. If sent away, he would immediately

return ; for, as he justly held that to be a species of punishment, he very naturally felt it to be a duty incumbent upon him to have his revenge ; and when he did return, of course the worthy alderman knew it, for he found himself subjected at every point to annoyances of the most galling character. Sometimes he and Bob would get all the worthy alderman's boots, wigs, hats, and umbrellas, to make a bonfire in the stable ; at other times he would make Bob throw water into the bed of the worthy alderman, or establish a vast number of nettles between the sheets with surpassing ingenuity. In fact, he regarded the worthy alderman as being neither more nor less than his natural enemy.

“What on earth am I to do with him ?” said that worthy person to his friend, Mr. Sharpe, just before he gave Stanley up wholly.

“Do with him !” exclaimed his friend, “do with him ! Give him a sound, undeniable flogging and repeat the dose daily.”

“But flogging makes him worse. He considers it an insult—he will have his revenge.”



“Revenge!” cried Mr. Sharpe, very contemptuously, “revenge! A lad like that talk of revenge! If I had him, I’d cut him to the very back bone!” And Mr. Sharpe looked particularly fierce, and shook his head with an air of inflexible determination, as he added, “Do you think I’d be mastered by a young wretch like that?”

“My dear friend,” rejoined the alderman, “depend upon this that he is not to be tamed in that way. I have tried it, my friend, I have tried it till I’m sick.”

“Well, why don’t you send him to school? Why don’t you place him under some severe master, who will undertake to bring him to his senses?”

“I have done so. Twenty severe masters have undertaken the task, and what has been the consequence? Why, the moment they have commenced their severity, he has pelted them with ink-stands, and started.”

“Of course you have not taken him back on those occasions?”

“In several instances I have; but, God bless your soul, it was of no use! Some re-

fused to receive him again ; while those who consented to give him another trial were never able to keep him above a day."

" I only wish that I had the management of him, that's all."

" I wish you had with all my soul !" exclaimed the alderman, with unexampled fervour. " Your bitterest enemy, my friend, could wish no worse."

" I'd tame him !" rejoined Mr. Sharpe ; " I'd exorcise the little rampant devil that's within him !"

" But how would you go to work ?— how would you act ? What on earth would you do with him ?"

" What would I do with him ? Will he not listen to reason ?"

" To be sure he will ; that's the worst of it. He'll sit down and argue the point with you for hours ; he'll tell you candidly, that if you insult him, he feels himself bound to avenge the insult ; that his honour—his honour, my friend !—prompts him to retaliate ; that he is prepared at any time to sign a treaty of peace, to the effect that if you cease to annoy him, he will

cease to annoy you ; and that in the event of such treaty being violated, of course he and you are again at open war."

"He is rather a queer customer to deal with," observed Mr. Sharpe.

"He *is* a queer customer. You'd be very apt to think so if you did but know all."

"And yet," said Mr. Sharpe, after a pause, during which he had looked very mysterious, "I'd be bound still to tame him. Why, if he were a boy of mine!"—Mr. Sharpe said no more, but he shook his head with unspeakable significance, and took a very deep inspiration through his teeth.

"Well, my friend, well"—urged the alderman, who wished him to proceed—"and if he *were* your son, what would you do with him?"

"Do! I'd do something with him! I'd teach him the difference! Do you think that he should ever get the upper hand of me?"

"But how would you manage it?—that's the great point. I'll just explain to you the way in which he acted last week. On Monday I simply said to him while at dinner, that he ought to be ashamed of his conduct, when he

seized the tureen, and sent the whole of the soup over me in an instant. I chastised him,—of course I chastised him—and he upset the table. I rushed at him again ; but having kept me at bay for some considerable time with the fragments of the dishes, he darted from the room. That night I found a number of nettles in my bed, and, on jumping out in agony, I discovered that my bed-room had scarcely a single pane of glass in it ; and in the morning I had neither a boot nor a hat to put on. I got hold of him by stratagem, and shook him with just violence, and what do you think he did? Why he instantly went into the pantry, got a basketful of eggs, and popped them at me, until really I was in such a state ! I ran after him ; but, no !—he kept up the fire, carrying his basket of ammunition upon his arm. Well, I caught him again in the course of the day, and locked him up in the cellar, and there he set to work, and I do not know how many bottles of wine he broke. I heard the crash, and went and shook the young scoundrel again—I could not help it—and again he set to work. He was busy all the morning. I



Geo. J. Brucksham

in earliest fashion





feared that he was employed in some mischief; indeed I was as certain of it as I was of my own existence. Accordingly, as I was enjoying my usual nap after dinner on the sofa, he quietly crept into the room with a tankard of treacle, the whole of which he poured over me so gradually, commencing at my knees, that I did not awake until he had literally covered me, and before I could rise he had rushed from the room. My friend," continued the alderman, with due solemnity, "I was in such a pickle! Yet what could I do? What is to be done with such a fellow? I knew perfectly well that until I discontinued my chastisement he would never cease to annoy me. Of course it's very hard,—I know and feel it, as a father, to be particularly hard; but then what could I have done in such a case? What would you, my friend, have done under the self-same circumstances?"

"What would I have done!" cried Mr. Sharpe, very indignantly. "I can scarcely tell what I should not have done."

And this proved the sum total of the advice the worthy alderman obtained from Mr. Sharpe;



for although the gentleman naturally fancied that if Stanley had been a son of his he would have tamed him, he at the same time felt utterly unable to explain how.

From that period the worthy alderman gave Stanley up. He would have nothing more to do with him; he turned him over at once to the surveillance of his mother, who adored him, and by whom the pristine waywardness of his disposition had been fostered.

“My dear, my sweet boy!—my own Stanley!” she would exclaim after a fit of desperation on his part, “you know how dearly, how fondly I love you. Now do not, pray do not indulge in these frantic bursts of passion. Indeed, indeed they will injure your health, my love,—I am perfectly sure that they will. Come, promise me now that you will in future avoid them—do promise, there’s a dear!”

You must promise me, mother, that in future you will not provoke me!”

“I will not—indeed I will not!” she would exclaim. “My heart beats with joy when you are happy.”

The tears would then start, she would em-

brace him and fondle him like a child, and arrange his fine hair, which flowed in ringlets upon his shoulders, and having, moreover, lavished a thousand kisses upon his brow, she would gaze upon her "own sweet Stanley," the "pride of her soul," with an expression of rapture.

And he *was* an extremely handsome youth, tall, and strikingly symmetrical; his eyes were of the most brilliant character, his features of the finest conceivable cast, while his presence was elegant, and even then commanding. That such a mother should have almost idolized him cannot be deemed marvellous. She could not, however, disguise from herself that she had from his earliest infancy cherished that spirit, which she now tried in vain to control. Nor was it, under the circumstances, at all extraordinary that from the age of fifteen he should have considered himself a man. He would suffer no one with impunity to designate him even a youth; and if any person applied to him the term "young gentleman," that person was made at once to feel the full force of his displeasure. The servants had been of course ac-

customed to style him Mr. Stanley ; but that servant was unblest who happened to pronounce the name of Stanley, after the alderman's unhappy dissolution. He would not permit it. "I pledge you my honour as a gentleman," he would say, "that if you dare to address me again as Mr. Stanley, I'll kick you to the devil."

It cannot hence be rationally expected that with these views and feelings, his grief at the period of the alderman's death was very loud or very deep. He wore "the trappings and the suits of woe" as a purely social matter of course ; but he hailed that period as the commencement of the era of his importance as a man. For albeit nearly the whole of the alderman's property, real and personal, had been left to the widow, he knew perfectly well that he should have just as much command over it, as if it had been bequeathed absolutely to him.

Stanley, however, was by no means content. He felt at first extremely *gauche*. He reflected that he was, after all, but the son of an alderman, and that reflection, let it come when it

might, never failed to inflict a wound upon his pride. He was a youth of keen perception. He saw around him those whom he conceived to be more elegant, more composed, more *au fait* to etiquette, more refined. He felt unable to endure this. He was perpetually tormented with the idea. He listened, therefore, for the first time, to the suggestion made by his mother, that he should pass at least two years at Eton. As a scholar he was passable ; but then he had only been at private schools, while those who shone in his judgment most brilliantly, had been to Oxford, or Cambridge, or Eton, at least. He conversed on the subject again and again, and at length became convinced that he ought to commence life in reality, as an Etonian. It happened that the majority of his associates had been to Eton ; and as they failed not to speak in high praise of the school, to explain that it had turned out by far the greater proportion of the most distinguished men of the age ; that none but Etonians were esteemed perfect men of the world, and that it was in fact far more famous for that than for absolute learning,—he eventually resolved upon going to Eton expressly in order to gain caste.

When this highly laudable resolution had been delicately communicated to the widow, she was delighted. She saw at once in Stanley a great man in embryo; and when she had been advised of the assumed fact that almost all the most distinguished men of the day were Etonians, she, of course, looked upon it as abundantly clear that all Etonians became distinguished men. This corollary was, in her judgment, really so natural and correct that, had five thousand pounds been required for the start, she would have given that sum with unspeakable pleasure. Her Stanley—her own Stanley, was about to become an Etonian! She did not pretend to understand much about it, but she nevertheless conceived, from his description, that to be an Etonian would at once enable Stanley to associate with the sons of the most distinguished.

Stanley himself had, however, still some misgivings on the subject. It was true he had read Virgil, and a trifle of Livy; he could, moreover, versify—a little; but he could not expect to be placed above the fourth form. He had heard of fagging: he had also heard of flogging; and he knew that if they attempted

to fag or to flog him!—No matter—it was settled: he had made up his mind to go, and go he would, if it were only to enable him to say that he had been.

Accordingly, everything which could be deemed essential was prepared, and the preliminaries necessary to enable him to commence at the ensuing half, having been most politely arranged by Mr. Seymour, the father of one of Stanley's, most gentlemanlike associates, he started with a purse sufficiently heavy, but with a heart not perhaps quite sufficiently light.

## CHAPTER II.

## STANLEY AT ETON.

THE first person to whom Stanley was introduced on his arrival was Alfred Julian, whose friends were on terms of close intimacy with the Seymours. Alfred, who was a fine high-toned boy—precisely the sort of fellow to meet Stanley's views,—undertook to initiate him into all the deep mysteries of the school; but he was, most unfortunately, himself in the fourth form, and hence could not, by having his friend for a fag nominally, save him from the tyranny of the fifth and the sixth. He therefore explained to him at once, that he really must make up his mind to become a fag, seeing that all, no matter how high might be the position of their families, were compelled to submit to it, and that it was held to be by no



means humiliating or degrading, but in reality a stimulus to exertion, inasmuch as those who took the right view of the matter strove, in consequence, to work their way up as soon as possible.

“All social distinctions here,” added Julian, “are in this respect levelled: for example, Joliffe, Villiers, Cleveland, Cholmondeley, and Howard,—to whom I shall introduce you, for they are all at our Dame’s—are the fags of Frogmorton, although he is a plebeian, while they are connected with the first families in the kingdom. We must not, therefore, feel ourselves degraded when called upon to act like them.

“Well, I shall see,” returned Stanley. “I’ll do as the rest do, if possible.”

He and Julian accordingly proceeded to Dame Johnson’s where they met with about twenty light-hearted, merry fellows.

He had not, however, been here more than an hour, when he was assailed by the older boys by a number of interrogatories which he held to be particularly impertinent. By Dashall especially, was he thus persecuted, for Dashall

was one of those who, panting to show off their power and importance, made the most of the three days before the arrival of the strapping fellows of the fifth and sixth forms. Stanley did not by any means approve of this practice, and therefore answered rather pettishly, which had the effect of making them persevere the more, for, although they saw something in his general tone and manner, which in a slight degree checked them, they held the process of teasing a new boy to be a right prescriptive and inviolable.

“My good fellow,” said Stanley, addressing Dashall, who would not give in, “don’t annoy me. I am anxious to make friends of all, and have therefore no desire to quarrel with you.”

“What! quarrel with me!” exclaimed the highly-indignant Dashall, with an air of astonishment the most intense. “No desire to quarrel with *me*! Come, I like that: it’s cool—very cool for a new one. Perhaps you would like to take it out, old fellow? Do you fancy yourself at all with the gloves?”

Stanley eyed him with an expression of con-

tempt, although he made no reply; but that terror of the juniors—the mighty Dashall—in a state of extreme ignorance of the chamber-practice Stanley had had with Bob, distinctly intimated to him, and that in terms the most powerful at his command, that if he would only wait until he had pulled on his boots, he would instantly accommodate him with a turn.

Stanley smiled; but Dashall, whose blood was up, looked very fierce, and gave his opponent such occasional glances as he fancied might wither him, while the juniors, whom the invincible Dashall had awed, really looked with an eye of pity upon Stanley, not, however, unmixed with astonishment at his apparently imperturbable calmness.

“Now, my fine fellow!” cried Dashall, having drawn on his boots. “If I take a little bit of the bounce out of you, it will do you precisely as much good as physic.”

Some of the juniors laughed at the sparkling wit of Dashall, while others advised Stanley to have nothing to do with him, he was such a desperate hitter; but Stanley, of course, remained unmoved, and Julian, who was anxi-

ous to ascertain what his new friend was made of, did by no means endeavour to dissuade him from accepting the challenge.

“Now then! are you afraid?” cried the imperious Dashall,—for really that desperate young gentleman had become very impatient; and he opened his shoulders and struck at the air, and ascertained the precise firmness of his muscles; but Stanley, who was in no sort of haste, made certain inquiries having reference to the character of his opponent, in order to learn what amount of punishment he should be justified in inflicting.

Julian could not but admire Stanley’s coolness; and having inferred hence that there must be some sterling stuff in him, he became nearly as eager for the fray as the fiery Dashall himself. Well, the gloves were produced, and Stanley rose. He buttoned his coat simply; but Dashall, bent upon doing some tremendous execution, stripped in an instant, and drew on the gloves.

“Now,” said Stanley, “I have no wish to hurt you; but if you persist in having a turn, you’ll have yourself alone to blame.”

“You don’t wish to hurt me !” cried Dashall. “Good again ! Well, I wish I may live ! What next ? You don’t wish to hurt me !” he repeated, for really he was very much amused, and he laughed very loudly, and the juniors joined him very merrily.

“Well, come, go to work !” said Julian at length. “You are both sure to win. ‘*Possunt quia posse videntur.*’ ”

In this particular instance, however, the combatants respectively held Virgil to be wrong ; and to prove that he was wrong they immediately commenced, Dashall striking one of the most imposing attitudes of which he was capable, while Stanley simply held up his guard.

Dashall, even at the commencement, did not much admire the unflinching firmness of Stanley’s eye. He notwithstanding felt quite certain to beat him, and sprang about, and feinted, and performed a great variety of extraordinary antics, displaying at each spring his agility and science to an extent altogether remarkable. On the other hand, Stanley kept quiet : he felt that by far the best course he could pursue—the

course calculated to save him a world of trouble in future, was that of allowing the great Dashall to tire himself first, and then to honour him with a few of his straight-forward favours, with the view of convincing him firmly of his error. He therefore stood for some considerable time on the defensive, while Dashall was twisting and turning, and torturing himself into all sorts of attitudes, marvelling greatly that every well-meant blow of his should be so coolly stopped.

“Come—come! you don’t appear to be doing *much!*” observed Stanley, when Dashall, by dint of striking out with desperation, had become nearly exhausted. “I think that it is now my turn to begin,” and he gave him a gentle tap over his guard. These taps were always given upon the bridge of the nose; and as even Bob never liked them much, it will be extremely reasonable to infer that the great Dashall did not approve of them at all. Stanley, nevertheless, tapped him again and again, in a manner so calm that the great man really became a little confused. He could not get even a blow at his opponent, who kept con-

stantly tapping, and tapping, and tapping, until the terror of the fourth absolutely became so enraged that he scarcely knew what to be at. He singularly enough began to feel that he had made a slight mistake in his man. He could do nothing with him. He tried a rush. Stanley stepped aside, and tapped him as he passed. He tried caution again; and again Stanley tapped him. This enraged him far more than a corresponding number of straightforward blows would have done, and he expressed himself precisely to that effect.

“Why don’t you strike out?” he exclaimed, with peculiar indignation, “and not keep on tapping and tapping like that!”

“As you please,” returned Stanley, who did on the instant strike out, and poor Dashall went down as if he really had been shot.

The great man did not like even this. He looked as if it were a thing of which he *could* not approve—which was very extraordinary, seeing that it was precisely what he had just before solicited,—and, while some of the juniors cheered very loudly, others looked very steadily at Stanley, as if lost in admiration of his prowess.



Dashall, however, stood up again, and Stanley calmly put to him whether he really liked that practice better than the other, but as he replied with a well-intentioned lunge of desperation, Stanley stopped him, and down he went again.

Another cheer burst from the juniors, and Dashall looked at them with an I'll-serve-you-out-when-I-catch-you-alone sort of scowl, which was in the abstract, no doubt, truly awful. He, however, by no means gave in. Stanley urged him to do so; but, no! he wanted only to give one fair hit to be happy. He therefore guarded himself with additional caution, and Stanley, notwithstanding, with additional rapidity kept tapping him precisely upon the bridge of his nose.

This he held to be about the most extraordinary thing in nature. He could not at all understand it. It mattered not a straw how imposing might be his attitude, how excellent his guard, how fiery his eye, or how fierce his general aspect, Stanley still kept on tapping and tapping, while *he* could do nothing whatever in return, although he plunged, and bucked, and bored, and jumped about in the most re-

markable manner possible, and with a facility which was really very admirable in itself.

The interest now became intense. It was perceived that the great man had screwed up his courage to a most ferocious pitch, although Stanley stood as calmly as ever. Dashall made a furious rush, and Stanley stopped him. This made him stand still for a moment, and look very wild, but on he rushed again. Stanley stopped again with his right, and with his left sent him down as before.

This seemed to inspire him with the conviction that he had made a mistake altogether. He felt much confused, and looked very much annoyed, for it appeared to have struck him—which was really very singular,—that he had had enough as nearly as possible, which Stanley no sooner perceived than he drew off his gloves, and offered Dashall his hand, which at that moment happened to be precisely the very thing he was most anxious to take.

“Well done!” he exclaimed with a patronising air, which was indeed very good of him. “Come, you are not a bad sort, after all! This is just what I call, you know, a friendly set-to.

You must be one of us after this !” And the great man shook Stanley by the hand with extreme cordiality, and laboured very desperately and very laudably to conceal his confusion from those around, the whole of whom most uncharitably and unamiably rejoiced at his defeat, for his over-bearing conduct, towards the smaller boys especially, had been intolerable.

“ Now, then,” said Julian, “ come to Joliffe’s den. We have clubbed for a feed, and are going to be jolly together.”

With this proposal Stanley was rather pleased; he therefore agreed to it at once, and went with Julian to the particular den in question, where he was hailed with three cheers as “ a miller of the first water,” by a dozen of the *élite*, who had already established themselves in a room, with the view, apparently, of proving how small is that space in which a dozen individuals can eat and be happy.

Our hero, who now began to feel himself at home, surveyed this banquetting-hall with great minuteness. It was about eight feet by six, yet did it contain twelve mortals, a nice assort-

ment of candle-ends, a leaden inkstand, a table, a sofa, a lot of books, and sundry hampers. The ancient walls were emblazoned with highly-coloured portraits of *prima donnas*, pretty barmaids, and theatrical warriors of every clime, while the spaces between them were appropriately embellished with elaborate drawings in pencil and chalk, of ships, monuments, and barns, with a few highly-finished artistical profiles of those masters and preceptors who had rendered themselves obnoxious, and who really seemed to have the largest noses in nature.

On the whole it will hence be inferred that this den looked particularly tidy; but that which at first puzzled Stanley more than all was the style in which his friends were addressed. Each appeared to have a *sobriquet* peculiar to himself, with which Stanley became acquainted on being informed, not merely in general terms that all had subscribed to the feast, but that Bull's-eye, for example, had contributed a German sausage; the Nigger, a wild duck; Hokee Pokee, a pigeon-pie; Macbeth, an extraordinary lot of gingerbread;

Twankay, a lump of Stilton cheese ; the Black Prince, a variety of raspberry-tarts ; Boggles, a Lilliputian ham ; and Robin hood, a Brobdignagian plumcake ; while the worthy host, Caliban, himself, had not only contributed a pheasant, but had secured two tankards of regulation ale.

Of the whole of these delicacies each guest partook indiscriminately, freely, and with infinite gusto. The gingerbread, for instance, relished well with the German sausage ; the raspberry-tarts with the ham ; the Stilton cheese with the pigeon-pie ; the plum-cake with the pheasant. In fact, taken together, they formed so remarkable a relish, that it seemed to be a pity almost that the whole of them had not been mixed with the ale in a bucket before they began.

Stanley had never seen a knot of fellows eat so fiercely ; but their enjoyment was amazingly pure ; and when they had stuffed themselves to their heart's content, they kept up a perpetual rattle, in the gibberish peculiar to the school, having reference chiefly to their wonderful exploits during the vacation, until

bed-time, when they wisely retired to their respective cribs in the merriest possible mood.

During the two succeeding days the little tyrants of the Dashall caste reigned supreme over all but Stanley; but when the fifth and sixth began to arrive, they gradually sunk into the most minute insignificance. The new boys wondered and walked about very mysteriously on witnessing the arrival of these tall fellows in their pea-jackets, wrappers, and cloaks, and retired for the night with about the same feelings as those which may reasonably be supposed to be entertained by convicts on their arrival in Van Dieman's Land, as they speculate profoundly upon the character of the men to whom tyrannous Fate has consigned them. Stanley was, however, an exception to the rule: he had no such feelings to depress him; he was, on the contrary, pleased with the appearance of new arrivals, and fancied that he might study their style and general bearing with great advantage. On the following morning he therefore set to work with the laudable view of qualifying himself for the Remove as soon as possible; but he had scarcely been

working an hour when, much to his astonishment, he was aroused by a desperate kick at his door, which served as a prelude to the following command, "I say, you new fellow, go to Fitzallan's study: he wants you."

Stanley certainly conceived this to be rather unceremonious; but he, notwithstanding, went to that particular study, and knocked.

"Come in!" cried Fitzallan, in an authoritative tone.

Stanley entered, and found himself in the presence of three tall fellows, one of whom on the instant observed that he was a strapper, when Fitzallan gave it as his unbought opinion that he would do, and without farther ceremony told him to sit down.

To affirm that Stanley held this reception to be highly flattering were to affirm that which is by no means strictly true. He did not; but he sat down, and waited with exemplary patience until some important matters then on hand had been arranged, when Fitzallan, addressing him again, said,

"Well, young fellow, what can you do?"

Stanley looked as if anxious for some slight



explanation, when Fitzallan continued, "Can you brush togs, clean candlesticks well, and light fires?"

"Upon my word," replied Stanley, with a smile, "I cannot pretend to those delicate accomplishments. I really have not had much experience in such matters."

"I did not suppose that you had. But take the mud off that pea-jacket. Come, let us see what you are made of."

Stanley looked at the pea-jacket, and looked at Fitzallan, and then looked at Fitzallan's friends, but did not attempt to obey orders.

"Do you hear?" cried Fitzallan, with a scowl.

"I do," replied Stanley; "but as I think that you are equally competent to the task, I'll leave you to do it." He thereupon rose and having opened the door, was just on the point of departing, when Fitzallan, starting up, caught him by the ear.

At that moment Stanley did not smile—no, not even slightly; yet (and really it is a most extraordinary thing to place upon record) there was something in his look which had the effect

of inducing Fitzallan to relinquish his hold. "I will not," said Stanley firmly, "notice this. I am willing to look over it; but if you dare again to *touch* me, I'll strike you to the ground!" And having delivered himself precisely to this effect, he walked calmly from the room, leaving Fitzallan and his friends in a state of amazement.

A short time after this Julian went to him. "Really, Thorn," said he, "you have done wrong. I spoke to Fitzallan myself; he is one of the most gentlemanly fellows in the school; and if you had consented to become his fag nominally, he would have treated you, for my sake, as a companion."

"Why," cried Stanley, "he commanded me to brush the mud off his pea-jacket!"

"Well, and what if he did?" rejoined Julian, soothingly. "It was simply because there were two of the Sixth with him."

"I'd not do it for any one on earth!" cried Stanley. "I'd die first!"

"But see what a position you place yourself in. If you'll not fag, you throw down the gauntlet. The fifth and sixth are sure to be at you."

“ I don’t care. I’ll do my best to beat them ; but even should I fail, I’ll not fag.”

“ Well, but just let me reason with you a little on this matter. If even you are able to beat them all, they are certain to make a dead set at you, and what will be the consequence ? Can you stand flogging ?”

“ No,” replied Stanley, “ decidedly not.”

“ Then I’d strongly recommend you not to get out of bounds. If you do, the præpostors are certain to catch you ; in which case, of course, you’ll be put in the bill.”

“ And if I will not be flogged,” rejoined Stanley, “ what then ?”

“ Why, in that case you’ll be with due ceremony expelled. But I am sorry you should have quarrelled with Fitzallan, for he is really a good-hearted fellow. Come, let me go and tell him you didn’t understand it ?”

“ By no means,” said Stanley ; “ I can perform such humiliating offices for no one.”

Julian now plainly perceived that Stanley was not destined to remain long at Eton. He therefore gave him the best advice under the circumstances, strongly recommending him

to keep within bounds ; a course to which Stanley, knowing what would follow, most firmly resolved to adhere.

Fitzallan, whose object in sending for Stanley was to serve him, and thus to oblige Julian, from whose family he had received many very kind attentions, took no farther notice of the matter ; but Scott and Hampden, who were with him at the time, marked Stanley, and closely watched him, in the lively expectation of catching him out of bounds. In this they were, however, disappointed. Nothing could tempt him to go a step beyond, knowing perfectly well what would be the result.

Now it happened a short time after this affair that Joliffe, one of his most intimate companions, was flogged. The cause was very trifling, and the effect was not very severe ; but, independently of the extreme indelicacy of the process,—and it really is very indelicate,—the degradation struck Stanley with so much force, that he at once resolved to manifest his abhorrence of this vile and disgusting species of punishment in a way which could not be mistaken.

He accordingly conferred with his compa-

nions on the subject ; and as they were equally anxious for the abolition of that species of punishment, contending very naturally, and very properly, that it ought at any rate to be confined to mere children, it was eventually resolved that they should get up a show of rebellion, than which at that period nothing could be more easy.

Stanley was chosen their leader, and they certainly could not have elected a more experienced hand. He set to work as usual at once, and in earnest. Having purchased an owl, which bore some resemblance to the then Lord Chief Justice, a dozen lively sparrows, and an infinite variety of fulminating balls, it was arranged that he himself should take the management of his interesting ornithological curiosity ; that Joliffe, Fox, and Villiers, should each have the command of four sparrows ; and that to Howard and Cholmondeley should be entrusted the distribution of the fulminating balls. A certain evening was fixed upon for the commencement of the rebellion, and they took especial care that their plumed troop should go to work as hungry as possible.

Well, the evening came, and the conspirators at the usual hour marched into school. There stood the revered doctor with all the gravity at his command, while the various masters respectively sported a corresponding aspect of solemnity. The signal was given; a buzzing was heard—a buzzing to which the whole school had long been accustomed, the process being known as that of “booing the master.”

“Silence!” cried the doctor, who really seemed to anticipate a storm; but the buzzing continued, and gradually increased until indeed it appeared to be absolutely universal.

“I’ll flog the first boy I discover,” said the doctor, who held it, by virtue of some strange and inscrutable perversion of judgment, to be disgraceful.

The buzzing, however, continued to increase; and it may be stated, as a remarkable fact, that although the lynx-eyed doctor looked in every direction with unexampled intensity and minuteness, not one of the rebels was he able to detect; and what made it, under the circumstances, still more remarkable was,

that they all seemed at that particular period to be studying with unprecedented zeal.

“ Silence !” again shouted the Doctor. “ I’ll punish the whole school !” And he really did feel very angry at that moment ; and just as he was solemnly promulgating something having reference to the highly unpopular process of taking away their holidays, which seemed to be generally understood and appreciated, Stanley, with all due gravity, drew the Lord Chief Justice from his pocket, and having given him an impetus in the perfect similitude of a pinch of the tail, allowed his lordship at once to take wing.

Away flew the Lord Chief Justice very naturally straight for the chandelier, which was a fine large round one, in which between thirty and forty candles were burning brightly. Whizz ! he went right in amongst them, knocking down a dozen at the very first pass, he then turned and charged the rest, and down went a dozen more, again he turned and went at them—and again. In short his lordship seemed to feel himself bound to work away until he had knocked down the lot, and left



the school in total darkness; for he scorned to give in until he had performed what he evidently conceived to be his duty, by achieving that object for which his introduction had been designed.

The school was now in an uproar; the laughter on every side was tremendous. The chief conspirators started three ear-piercing cheers, which were echoed by the rebels in the aggregate with consummate shrillness and effect, while Howard and Cholmondeley were busily engaged in strewing the fulminating balls about the gangway.

The school was dark as pitch, and the rebels seemed to entertain an idea that the doctor was not very highly delighted; but that which tended more than all to confirm this impression was the heart-rending tone in which he called for more candles. The rebels in general, however, held it to be glorious sport, and kept it up zealously, loudly, and boldly, until the fresh lights were produced.

They could now see the doctor—they could see that he did not appreciate the fun—which was very extraordinary. They could not, how-

ever, be mistaken in this ; for, instead of his being convulsed with merriment, he absolutely expressed what he felt very warmly, and gave each opinion with infinite point.

The præpostors were now directed to station themselves in various parts of the school, with the view of taking observations ; but during their progress they walked, as a matter of course, upon the fulminating balls, which went bang ! bang ! bang ! at every step.

The doctor did not—he really *could* not—approve of these proceedings. On the contrary, he conceived them to be highly irregular, and very monstrous ; and by the time he had delivered a few appropriate observations immediately bearing upon the point, the fresh lights were established,—not again in the chandelier, but in various parts of the school. The instant this grand desideratum had been accomplished, Fox, Villiers, and Joliffe with surpassing dexterity drew forth their sparrows, which in the common course of nature made at once for the lights, and never left them until they had extinguished them all.

The whole school was again in an uproar—

the sport was held to be prime! The præ-posters, who had for the few preceding minutes been standing quite still, now began again to move, and the fulminating balls again went bang! bang!

More lights were demanded by the doctor; for being a man who was not a profound scholar merely, but one who looked at things in general with a learned spirit of human dealings, he wisely imagined that the ammunition of the rebels had been expended, which, as far as matters had proceeded, was extremely correct. But the Lord Chief Justice, who, in doing so much execution, had undergone a temporary derangement of his faculties, had by this time recovered his power of observation, and hence no sooner did he observe the fresh lights introduced, than he felt it his duty to fly at them before they reached the places for which they had been destined. He did so, and so effectually did he perform that duty, that in the space of three minutes the whole school was in darkness again.

The doctor said something extremely severe,

and his observations absolutely seemed to have reference to the subject; for, although he was indistinctly heard, he on the instant retired—of course in the dark.

Now the præposters knew nothing of this conspiracy against the doctor's peace; but Scott and Hampden fixed, nevertheless, their suspicions at once upon Stanley. They knew that he had a number of satellites; they knew that those satellites were spirited daring young dogs, who would by no means object to enter into such a conspiracy; and they moreover knew, that if they could only bring it clearly home to him, they should have the extreme gratification of proving whether he would in reality suffer expulsion in preference to being flogged.

With infinite zeal they therefore set to work, and eventually, by virtue of specious manœuvring, obtained a slight clue to the delinquency of Stanley, Fox, Villiers, and Howard. Even this was, however, deemed sufficient. Their suspicions were communicated to the doctor, and the day following that on which this communication was made

the doctor solemnly directed the delinquents to stand forth.

They stood forth accordingly, and the doctor, in the first place, distinctly explained to them the nature of the charge ; he then went on to illustrate the enormity of the offence ; and having, in the third place stated the penalty prescribed, he with all due solemnity observed, that as he had no absolute proof of their guilt, he should be perfectly satisfied that they were innocent if they would then declare that they were so, upon their honour as Etonians.

Of course Stanley would not do this, nor would Villiers, nor would Fox, nor would Howard. They were silent. The question was again put ;—they made no reply. The doctor was therefore convinced that they were guilty.

Now came the test. The suspense was profound. The doctor held a grave conference with the rest of the masters, of whom one distinctly intimated that, as it was their first offence, they ought to be flogged, not expelled ; and as this appeared to be the general feeling amongst them, the doctor very pointedly put it

to the chief delinquent whether he would consent to be flogged.

“No,” replied Stanley, “decidedly not. It was to mark our sense of the indelicate character of that species of punishment that we acted as we did.”

The doctors looked with great earnestness at Stanley, and then turned and looked earnestly at his colleagues, who looked in return very earnestly at him. Without the slightest comment, however, on the nature of this answer, the same question was put to the others, who made, word for word, the same reply.

“Then,” said the doctor, “I have but one course to pursue;” and, in tones the most solemn and impressive, he added, “I hereby publicly expel you from this school, and entail upon you all the consequences thereof.”

The same day Stanley, Fox, Villiers, and Howard, in a post-chaise, left Eton together.

## CHAPTER III.

SHOWS PRECISELY HOW PERSONS CAN BE PLACED  
IN A PECULIAR POSITION.

IT is probably one of the most striking truths in nature, that we are never inspired with a due appreciation of that which we have. We must lose it—no matter what it be, health, wealth, or any other acknowledged sublunary blessing—before our estimate of its value can be correct. Neither wives, husbands, parents, nor friends are duly estimated until they are gone. While we possess them, our process of valuation partakes of the character of that of the Israelites when about to purchase garments : we look with great minuteness at the defects, without a scruple, should it answer our immediate purpose to make them appear to be



greater than they are ; but when we lose them, their failings we magnify not, but on the contrary look at their virtues, and find those failings completely eclipsed.

Now, as this most remarkable truth is of universal application, it may not be deemed extraordinary that it should have applied to the amiable relict of Alderman Thorn. While the alderman was living, he was not precisely all that that lady desired ; he was nothing—very frequently, indeed, was he nothing—at all like what she desired. She would sigh, she would be sorry,—she would wish that if he were but—then she would think !—But oh ! how awful it is to dive into the thoughts—the occasional secret thoughts—of those who unhappily conceive that they are too tightly bound by matrimony's soft silken cords, of which the gloss, like that of prematurely old bell-ropes, an indulgence in anger and an abuse of authority, not fair wear and tear have worn off. We should there in the highest perfection behold the extreme wickedness of that which is termed the human heart,—we should there discover wishes and conceptions of a

character so startling and so vile, that even they who have cherished those wishes and conceptions endeavour to conceal them from themselves.

Without, therefore, going more minutely into the previous thoughts of the widow Thorn, who most certainly never wished them to be publicly known, it may perhaps be sufficient to state, that although she had treated the worthy alderman not fondly,—although the practical illustrations of domestic felicity she had induced were particularly hot,—although, in short, she was continually at him, pointing out dreadful faults, which he never could perceive, she began now to think that, after all, he was really a kind-hearted, generous, good, dear sort of soul, and hence became absolutely inconsolable.

She wept: very frequently she wept—and more especially on her pillow—and sighed, and wept again, and sometimes sobbed, and reproached herself bitterly for having previously inspected the faults only of him whose virtues were now in the ascendant. She had not felt it nearly so much before Stanley went to Eton;

but he had no sooner left her than she began to feel very acutely the lamentable loneliness of her position. She was very wretched, and very disconsolate, and what, in her judgment, was far worse than all, albeit she had been no less than fifteen months a widow, not one of the late worthy alderman's friends had proposed to convince her that the loss she had sustained was not absolutely irreparable! She gave dinners: she dressed with extreme elegance: she did all that she could with prudence to inspire those whom she conceived to be likely to propose with due courage. No! they were polite; they never refused an invitation; they were at all times particularly attentive and agreeable—but nothing more. She thought it strange—very strange; she really could not in any way account for it. She was rich, and she was tall: she felt that she was interesting, if not strictly handsome: yet not a single creature would propose!

Such being the state of things then, she began very deliberately and very seriously to turn the matter over in her mind; for although she had a son—a dear, darling son,—who was,

doubtless, a very great comfort in his way,—she really felt that the comfort of a son, however great it might be, was not comparable, under the existing circumstances, with that of a husband—which was really very natural, and hence, very correct.

Now, within the brilliant circle of her acquaintance, there was a highly-respectable individual named Ripstone, whom Stanley from his infancy had been accustomed to call his Pippin. This gentleman held a deeply-responsible situation in the Treasury, and had moreover been a schoolfellow of the late worthy alderman, who had ever received and esteemed him as a friend. He had never been married. He had, therefore, no practical knowledge of the blessings with which matrimony teems; and it may be added as an extraordinary fact, that he had never developed the slightest inclination to become conversant with that particular branch of human knowledge; which certainly does not precisely accord with the popular view of social excellence. Mr. Ripstone was, notwithstanding, a very aimable man; and although he was not very

rich, he had an annual salary of four hundred pounds, and with all the generosity in nature, spent each quarter's pay in advance.

To this gentleman the widow had given great encouragement; for, independently of his being a respectable-looking man—though rather short for his circumference, which was not inconsiderable,—he was a nice, kind, quiet, clever, excellent creature, who *would* offend no one, and whom, moreover, no one could offend. He had been at every one of the widow's parties; he had never by any chance begged to be excused; he had always arrived with the strict punctuality of the sun, and had invariably made himself very agreeable. Nor had his visits been confined to those occasions. By no means. He frequently dined with her alone! She gave him *every* opportunity to declare himself; spoke warmly, and eloquently, on the subject of wedded life; marvelled greatly that *he* should have no thought whatever of entering into the blissful marriage state; explained the utterly disconsolate character of her own position, and proved to demonstration that, with all her wealth, she could not in her extreme loneliness be happy!

But, no ! It was all of no use. He was still as insensible as a block of Scotch granite.

There would the poor widow sit, sighing, glancing, and fidgetting about, until she really became so provoked that she scarcely knew what on earth to do with herself, while he would be twiddling his thumbs, or mechanically twirling his watch-chain with a heart as dead to every sigh, look, smile, and sentiment of affection as a stone. It was monstrous ! The widow at times had no patience with the man. She herself felt it strongly and deeply to be monstrous ; and that natural feeling at length prompted her boldly and resolutely to arrive at the conclusion that it would not do at all to go on any longer so. She held it to be a pity—a thousand pities—that Ripstone should be so excessively timid ; but as she had done all in her power to inspire him with due courage, and as every effort had signally failed, she resolved, with surpassing firmness, to take one grand step, which, if it did nothing else, would at least put an end to that cruel suspense with which she was then so constantly tortured.

Accordingly, on the morning of the very day

on which Stanley left Eton, she forwarded a special invitation to Mr. Ripstone to dine with her alone, at the same time intimating clearly that she was anxious to have the benefit of his advice upon a subject in which the whole of her future felicity on earth was involved.

This puzzled Mr. Ripstone. He thought it very odd ; and it was, in fact, remarked by his colleagues that he looked most mysterious : nay, one of them, with infinite delicacy, suggested that if anything of a pecuniary character disturbed him, he had a few pounds which were quite at his service ; but this was not what Ripstone wanted ! It was kind of his friend—very kind ; the motive was appreciated highly : but that which he wanted was simply to know the nature of that advice which the widow required. Perhaps it had reference to some particular purchase ; perhaps she was anxious to sell out some stock ; or, perhaps, it was something about something,—yet how was her future felicity involved ? That was the point ! and his utter inability to guess even what it could be, kept him in a high state of fever until the clock struck four, when he hastened



home to dress, and at five, to a minute, he knocked at the door of the widow.

The widow heard that knock. She well knew that it was his; and became extremely nervous as he ascended the stairs, and trembled—slightly trembled—as she held forth her hand to receive him.

“My dear madam,” said he, with a face of some considerable length, “what on earth is the matter?”

“Oh! nothing—at least nothing very—*very* particular.” The faltering voice of the widow, however, convinced him that there *was* something very particular.

“You are looking very well,” he continued, and this was a positive fact. She was looking very well; her rouge had been established with great delicacy of touch, and she wore a richly-figured satin dress, while her pearled heaving bosom, her turban, and her waist, were embellished with jewels of the most sparkling caste, so that really, as the rays of the chandelier fell with the most refined softness upon her, she shone altogether refulgent. It was hence by no means an inappropriate observation, and as

it *was* not inappropriate, the widow felt pleased with it rather than not, and vouchsafed a reply, of which the purport was, "Yes, thank heaven !"

"Well, come ; tell me all," said Mr. Ripstone. "You really must, and at once, for I shall not have a moment's peace of mind until I know what it is."

The widow smiled sweetly ; and glanced at the mirror playfully, and patted his cheek absolutely ! Dinner was announced at this interesting moment ; she therefore took his arm, and explained on the stairs that he really was a good, kind creature, and that, if he would but wait with becoming patience, he should know all anon.

Very well. This was highly satisfactory as far as it went, and they sat down to dinner. The widow on that occasion had not much of an appetite. She managed the soup very fairly ; and, on raising the first glass of wine to her lips, the glass itself touched her teeth only twice ; but nothing bearing even the semblance of solid food could she manage ; no, not even the breast of a delicate chicken, presented by

Ripstone himself! She really felt so confused. Even Simpson looked at his mistress as if a slight explanation would have been a great relief to him, but of course he had nothing of the sort. She tried to chat with all her wonted point and eloquence; but that was a dead failure; it could not be done. Happily, however, this was not much perceived by her guest; for, although his accustomed politeness induced him to expostulate with her on the popular subject of keeping up the stamina—to express his lively fears that she was not, after all, in the most robust health, and then to hint, with all the delicacy at his command, that it was probably attributable to the fact of her having then something on her mind,—he himself never ate a more excellent dinner. For it happened singularly enough that everything which he more especially favoured had been prepared,—a truly remarkable circumstance, and, moreover, so fortunate being so purely accidental! He therefore enjoyed himself exceedingly, and ate, drank, and chatted with infinite spirit, and was really very amiable—very! but the widow whom he was thus so unconsci-

ously *killing* all the time, and who, knowing that she had a great duty to perform, wished ten thousand times that it were over, had a very unusual palpitation of the heart: it would flutter so! She therefore sighed deeply, while he chatted gaily, and thus this ever-memorable dinner passed off.

“Now—now, my dear madam,” said Mr. Ripstone, when Simpson had left the room, “come, tell me: what is this business, this serious matter?”

He here pressed her warmly, and gazed upon her face very fervently, and her lily hand trembled in his, and she breathed very quickly, averting her smiling face gently, and looked upon the carpet very prudently, while her pulse was one hundred and forty.

“Come—come!” he continued, with surpassing amiability both of expression and of tone, “be calm, and tell me all—all about it.”

The widow at this moment, with a most emphatic sigh, observed, “Women are poor silly things.”

“Well—well; but, pray keep me no longer

in suspense : it is really very painful to see you unhappy."

" I know you to be a kind, sincere friend," said the widow ; " but is it indeed true that my uneasiness can afflict you ?"

" My dear creature ! can you do me the injustice even to doubt it ? You know—you have known me sufficiently long to feel sure that there is nothing I could do to promote your happiness that I would not do with infinite pleasure."

" My friend !" said the widow, and smiled ; and then looked at him earnestly, and warmly pressed his hand as she added, " Are you quite sure of that ?"

Mr. Ripstone himself now became much confused. He could not understand it. What—what could it mean ? He could not tell : he could not conceive : he could not even call up a rational conjecture on the subject.

The widow saw his confusion. It somewhat relieved her. She became in proportion more calm ; but, although she felt very considerably better, she did not then feel herself equal to the task. He pressed her with great warmth and

eloquence again and again for an explanation; but her nerves still required composure. She would have coffee first: then, if possible, she would explain the whole affair. Accordingly for another mortal hour was Ripstone tortured, for, although a great variety of inuendos were shot like arrows, well feathered and pointed, not one hit the bull's eye of his comprehension: they all of them fell very wide of the mark. This was tiresome — particularly tiresome to both; but it really was *not* the widow's fault: it was Ripstone's, and Ripstone's alone!

Well, the widow rang for coffee, and retired to give some further instructions. "*Now,*" thought Ripstone, "for this most extraordinary disclosure!" He rose; and on her return the widow found him apparently lost in admiration of a Titian; but, although his eyes were, his thoughts were not, upon that. His thoughts were—no matter: the coffee was produced, and he was again sweetly summoned.

With all the elegance and grace of which she was capable the widow sipped and sipped, alternately examining the countenance of Ripstone, and the delicate pattern of her cup. At

length, feeling that this was not the way to make progress, as Ripstone would *not* understand, she breathed a sigh fiercely—one sigh,—and took courage; and while still intently gazing upon her cup, as if she really had never noticed the pattern before, she smiled, and then said, “ I’m very silly,—I am—really—like a child. I wished to have your advice upon a matter of some—slight—in fact, of considerable—for it is to me of considerable importance—and yet—do you think that I can get my heart high enough? Upon my word, a mere girl of fifteen would have far more courage. I am but a poor, weak, simple creature, after all.”

Mr. Ripstone now looked unspeakably anxious, and said, “ My dear lady, proceed—pray proceed: it is something, I fear, of great moment.”

“ It is something,” rejoined the widow, who now felt that the ice had been broken,—“ it is something of a character extremely delicate, which—really I cannot—indeed—indeed I cannot—I dare not explain even now.”

The expression of Mr. Ripstone’s round face now became very droll. “ Extremely delicate?”



thought he. "It's very odd." He scarcely knew that he should be justified in urging her to proceed. The phrase, "extremely delicate," really struck him as being very strong; and yet when he came to think of it, he found that his impression had been that that phrase really signified something extremely indelicate, which he now at a glance saw was extremely incorrect, and therefore said, with his characteristic firmness and force, "My dear lady, if you really have confidence in my honour and sincerity—"

"My friend," interrupted the widow, "I have—believe me, I have the greatest possible confidence in both: you are, in fact, now, the only soul in whom I can confide. I will, therefore, explain. A woman," she continued, with great deliberation, "is considered, of course, the weaker vessel. She is so naturally, and is recognised as being so socially; and hence it is, I presume, that society has prescribed that the weaker shall be wooed by the stronger. I believe that view of the matter to be correct?"

"Oh! perfectly — perfectly—quite — quite correct, my dear lady; proceed."

"Well, a woman—upon my life I scarcely

know how to put it,—but a man in the majority of cases having reference to marriage, is presumed to possess advantages—not merely of a moral and physical description,—but in a pecuniary point of view he is presumed to possess advantages and hence, I apprehend, it is clearly understood that in all such cases the proposal should, of course, proceed from him. Am I right?”

“Oh!—quite—decidedly—quite right!” cried Ripstone, more puzzled than ever.

The softest, the sweetest, and most delicate smile illuminated her face as she resumed :

“But, suppose—I will put it so—suppose—leaving out of the question all moral and physical superiority—suppose the pecuniary advantages of the lady to be infinitely superior to those of the person to whom she is really attached—do you consider that in such a case she would really be justified in proposing to *him*? Would you hold such an act to be indiscreet, or imprudent?”

“Not if he were really a man of honour,” replied Ripstone, “and had proved himself worthy of that lady’s choice. Most decidedly

not. Were he as poor as Job himself, in such a case she would be justified, seeing that custom *alone* prescribes the contrary course."

"Well, now, that is indeed a remarkable coincidence," rejoined the widow archly. "It happens to be precisely my opinion. I was thinking the other day that in a case of that description the propriety of such a step could scarcely be impugned. But, suppose—let us put it to ourselves, just by way of illustration, for I really should like to be clear upon the point—suppose, then, that I,—being disengaged, of course—had, let me see, say some thousands a-year; and that you—being equally disengaged—had an income, we will say, of as many hundreds. Very well. Now, in the event of my proposing to you—you know this is, of course, a mere supposititious case,—but, in such an event, would you accept that proposal?"

"Why, that," replied Ripstone, "would mainly depend upon whether I had known you sufficiently long to be satisfied that the happiness of both would be thereby enhanced."

"But, assuming all the facts having refe-

rence to knowledge and to feelings to be in every particular precisely as they are, if I were to offer this hand, would you accept it?"

"Decidedly. Without a moment's hesitation."

"My friend—my dear friend!" said the widow. "It is yours!"

Mr. Ripstone seemed absolutely lost in amazement; he seized her extended hand, however, and pressed and kissed it with affectionate fervour. They both felt so happy! They embraced. Their veins tingled with the drollest sensations. Again they embraced, and again! when Stanley dashed into the room."

The lovers started. They were paralyzed. Had Satan himself at that moment appeared, they could not have been struck with more terror. They could *not*, or they would have sunk into the earth.

"Good God!" exclaimed Stanley, whose eyes flashed with fiery indignation. "What—*what* is the meaning of this? *Mother*, what am I to understand?"

The widow sank into a chair, overwhelmed with confusion.

“Leave the room, sir!” cried Stanley, pointing fiercely to the door, and addressing Ripstone, who wished to explain. “Leave instantly! Stay another moment, at your peril!”

Poor Ripstone, of course, was aware that he had done nothing wrong; but, then, he happened to know Stanley too well to remain, and hence he quitted not only the room, but the house, as soon as possible.

“*Mother!*” cried Stanley, when Ripstone had departed, “you have perilled if not sacrificed your own honour and mine!”

“No! Stanley, my dearest love,—no!” exclaimed the widow, when extending her arms wildly, she fell upon his neck, and clinging to him instantly fainted.

## CHAPTER IV.

STANLEY HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH RIPSTONE  
AND UPSETS HIS NERVES ALTOGETHER.

WHEN Stanley had summoned the servants with due promptitude and violence, he left the room, and such restoratives as were immediately available were applied with great delicacy and zeal to the temples, palms, and nostrils of the overwhelmed widow. The attendants were, however, in an intellectual maze, out of which they could not see their way at all clearly, for their mistress had not been accustomed to faint: and then that Mr. Ripstone!—where was Mr. Ripstone? It really seemed to them, viewing the thing as they did in all its varied ramifications, to be very suspicious; and they looked at each other with an aspect which denoted that they absolutely felt it to be mysterious in the extreme. Surely Stanley

had not pitched the man out of the window?—and yet it was thought extremely probable.

Simpson opened the window with a view to the immediate satisfaction of that thought; but Mr. Ripstone was not in the area! nor was he impaled upon any one of the spikes! This had a direct tendency to render the mystery more dense, for who had let him out? As not one of them had had that honour, the impression became general that he was still in the room. They hence examined every place in which it was both most likely and most unlikely for a gentleman to be concealed, and the butler was just on the point of ascertaining whether the well-known hat and peculiar cloak of Mr. Ripstone were in the hall, when the widow developed striking symptoms of reanimation and soon after retired for the night, without, however, imparting the slightest information as to the cause of the occurrence to her puzzled attendants, who—having created innumerable conjectures with the celebrated tact and ingenuity of their order—were by no means satisfied, but felt, strongly and most acutely



felt, that there was at the bottom of it something.

As soon as the widow had retired the drawing-room bell was rung, in a style in which it never was rung by any chance save when Stanley was at home. There could not be two opinions about who had pulled the rope. It was therefore immediately answered by Simpson, who, while receiving orders for supper, looked curiously round and round the room.

“What are you looking for?—what have you lost?” demanded Stanley, in a tone that was not extremely pleasing.

“Me sir? Nothing, sir—nothing,” mumbled Simpson. “I only thought, sir, that perhaps Mr. Ripstone——”

“What!” exclaimed Stanley.

Simpson muttered something, of which the design was apparently to convey some idea, and vanished.

Now, albeit the widow retired to bed, her sensibilities had received so powerful a shock that she found it impossible to sleep. She turned and turned again, and sighed and

wept, and exclaimed, *sotto voce*, “ Why should I have been so alarmed? The position was peculiar, certainly—there’s no denying that; but, then, why should a mother thus fear her own son ?”

To this natural interrogatory she felt unable to give a perfectly satisfactory answer, and hence really began to form a resolution to break the chains which she herself had forged to shackle her will. But then her fond love for Stanley ! And what can be compared with the love of a mother? It is ardent, enduring and pure to the last. There is—there can on earth be—no love so devoted, so constant, so powerful. By its virtue a mother’s soul seems centred in her child, in whom alone exists the power to fill her heart with pure joy or to plunge it into misery the most poignant : still be that fond love the source of rapture or of wretchedness, it shines in the ascendant till life is extinct.

In its most comprehensive sense the widow was actuated by this love for Stanley. He was the pride of her heart : she idolized, adored him ! Still she thought it hard, that she

should be so controlled, because—as she explained to herself again and again very pointedly—if there be one state of life in which a lady has the privilege of being more independent of family influences than in another it is distinctly the state of widowhood: she therefore held control to be intolerable. She did not, she could not by any means recognise the right of a son to dictate to a mother at all under the peculiarly afflicting circumstances of the case: she thought it highly incorrect and very presumptuous, and the style in which she resolved to be thenceforth mistress of her own actions, as far, at least, as matrimonial matters were concerned, was so extremely energetic that it eventually sent her to sleep.

In the morning, when she met Stanley at the breakfast-table, he requested an explanation of the scene on the previous night. “Mother,” said he, “what is the meaning of that which I last evening witnessed?”

“What you saw,” replied the widow, “I grant, was—odd: but then, under the circumstances——”

“Circumstances? What were the circumstances?”

“Why, my love, the fact is—I feel that I must tell you—a proposal had just been made as you entered.”

“A proposal? What, of marriage?” exclaimed Stanley, knitting his brows and pursing his lips into an expression which fluctuated finely between a smile and a sneer. “I had no idea the fellow had so much impudence in him. And—you *accepted* that proposal?”

“Why, my dearest love, look at my present position. It is really very lonely, more especially——”

“Mother! do you mean to tell me that you have promised to marry Ripstone?”

“Why, what could I do? He is a very old friend; and while conscious of his fondness for you, I well knew that you had ever been sincerely attached to him.”

“I!—I attached to him?”

“What, not to your own Pippin?”

“Pippin! Mother, are you mad? But the thing is too monstrously absurd. If you must marry, choose some one worthy of you. Why have you not a becoming degree of pride? There are hundreds of men—men of influence

and station!—with whom you might form an alliance. For Heaven's sake banish from your mind the idea of throwing yourself away upon so paltry a creature as this poor fool Pippin."

The fact of Stanley arguing any point which he had made up his mind to carry was a species of condescension for which the widow was not prepared: it had therefore, alone, no inconsiderable weight: but when in addition to this he assailed her vanity, the consideration sank deeply into her heart. What Stanley had suggested *might* occur! She might become the wife of a man of influence—perhaps, of a Baronet!—why not of a Peer? She could really see nothing to prevent it! Yet how on earth could she ever look in the face of Mr. Ripstone again?

"Leave Pippin to me," cried Stanley. "Let him be invited here this evening. I will write to say that I am anxious to see him. I will make him feel that if he values his peace he had better not attempt to form an alliance with you."

An invitation was accordingly sent to Mr. Ripstone immediately after breakfast, and

Stanley then explained—without, however, entering at all into particulars—that he had left Eton. The widow, being of course utterly ignorant of the fact of his having been expelled, was amazed.

And so was Mr. Ripstone. The night preceding he had not an hour's sleep. He had been racked with conflicting emotions. He had placed,—with an eye to his own prospect of peace,—the widow's love in juxtaposition with Stanley's tyrannous spirit, and found the balance against the former to be so considerable, that he really began to think that his present state of life was, on the whole, to be preferred. But, when he received the invitation, his ideas on the subject were in an instant, as if by magic, metamorphosed. The matter then assumed a very different aspect. He saw at a glance, and with a distinctness which was absolutely marvellous in itself, that Stanley, having had the prominent features of the case explained, wished to acknowledge his error and to apologize for his abruptness, which Ripstone very naturally held to be very proper. "I always thought," he observed, with great point

to himself, "that that youth was all right at the bottom, and this tends to confirm the correctness of that thought, for he evidently feels that he was wrong, and is now anxious to make all the reparation in his power. But I'll have no apologies! No! it shall *never* be said that I exacted humiliation from any living soul."

Actuated by this extremely generous sentiment, he went with a light heart through those toils of the day which are notoriously inseparable from an official existence, and in the evening repaired to the mansion of his love.

The widow was invisible. He found Stanley in the drawing-room alone, and the coldness with which he received him not only contrasted very strongly with his own elastic bearing, but had the effect of inspiring him at once with the conviction that he had made a slight mistake.

"Be seated, Mr. Ripstone," said Stanley, in a haughty tone. "I sent for you, *sir*," he continued, "to demand an explanation of your conduct last night."

"An explanation?" echoed Ripstone with great timidity.



“Ay, sir! An explanation.”

“Re-eally,” observed Ripstone, who felt much confused, “I thought—I hoped—that—all had been explained.”

“Sir! you have known me sufficiently long to know that I am not a man to be trifled with. Instantly, therefore, explain to me all that has reference to the *disgraceful* scene I witnessed last night, or you will hear from me, sir, in the morning; and, if you will *not* go out, I’ll post you as the vilest coward that ever crawled.”

In this there was nothing which could by any process be misunderstood; all was perfectly candid, straightforward and clear; but, then, what could Ripstone say? His gallantry forbade him to explain all, because that would have been most unfair towards the widow; and then the idea of going out!—why, he had never fired off a pistol in his life!—he had never even had one in his hand!—while the fact of his being posted, or brought before the public in any such shape, would in all probability accomplish his ruin! He therefore knew not how to act in this extremity: he paused and was puzzled; but at length he ventured to

observe, that he really could not in any honourable act see anything disgraceful.

“Sir,” exclaimed Stanley, “you are mistaken if you conceive that I am thus to be put off; I demand an explanation, and will have it, or the only alternative society prescribes.”

“But I have nothing to explain,” said Mr. Ripstone, “save that just as you entered we were performing that which is, I believe, invariably the little playful innocent prelude to the matrimonial bond.” Here Ripstone ventured to smile, for he positively had an idea that he should thus be enabled to draw Stanley into a belief that it was nothing unusual after all.

Stanley, however, was not to be propitiated, for, looking fiercely at Mr. Ripstone, he demanded in a loud voice, and with authoritative emphasis, how he dared to presume to propose to his mother.

“Why,” said Mr. Ripstone, “I do not conceive that I have been very daring, or very presumptuous.”

“Indeed?” rejoined Stanley, with an expression of contempt. “Compare my mother’s wealth with your own!”

“As far as wealth is concerned,” said Ripstone blandly, “love levels all distinctions.”

“Love!—bah!—an old fool like you indeed talk about love!”

“That’s very discorteous,” observed Mr. Ripstone: “but I’ll not be offended, because I make it an invariable rule not to be offended by any one. I must, however, repeat, that the application of the term ‘old fool’ is extremely discorteous.”

“I know it,” said Stanley: “I meant it to be so; and I mean to say farther, what you may deem equally discorteous, that if *ever* I again catch you beneath this roof, or ascertain that you hold even the slightest communication with my mother, in any shape, I’ll blow your brains out.”

Ripstone pouted his lips, and looked at Stanley in a very straightforward manner. “I’ll blow your brains out” were very strong words; in fact, it was on the whole a very sanguinary sentence. He did not approve of it at all, and therefore said with some spirit and point, “Really this, I must confess, is not exactly the sort of reception I might reasonably

have anticipated : nor do I acknowledge your right to interfere with the domestic arrangements of your mother and myself."

"Indeed!—do you not? Then, sir, let me tell you that I have such right, and will take special care that it is exercised fully. *I* am master here, and you shall know it."

"But I have the strongest possible reason," urged Ripstone, "to believe that the feelings of affection between your mother and me are mutual."

"I care not for that," cried Stanley. "Do you flatter yourself for one moment that I shall ever be sufficiently idiotic to recognise you in any shape as *my* father! But without condescending to say another syllable on the subject,—for I will not exact from you anything like a promise, seeing that that would be leading you to suppose that I doubt my own power,—be assured that if ever you dare to communicate, either by word or by letter, with my mother, or ever presume again to enter this house,—(and if you have the temerity to do either, I shall be certain to know it,)—I will horsewhip you!"

There are, questionless, some who would have spurned this menace, and who—the widow being willing—would have married her at once, in defiance of all opposition ; but Ripstone was not one of these. He was dreadfully alarmed ; his whole nervous system had been utterly astonished. He knew the desperate character of Stanley ; he knew how fondly his mother loved him, and how zealous she had ever been in his cause : he also knew that if even they *were* to marry in opposition to him, he should never have a single moment's peace ; and therefore, holding peace to be one of the greatest blessings in life, he rose, bowed, and, without giving audible utterance to another word, left the house, with the firm determination to enter it no more.

## CHAPTER V.

ILLUSTRATES HOW AN ARDENT YOUTH MAY ASSUME  
MORE CHARACTERS THAN ONE.

THERE is perhaps nothing so grateful to the feelings of mankind as the possession of power. From the wearer of the crown, through all the varied ramifications of society, even down to the vilest beggar that ever blistered his leg to excite sympathy, however much may be said of the power of love, the love of power reigns supreme over all.

Without, however, dwelling upon a subject so deep, for it really is not essential to the progress of this history, it may in all probability be sufficient, for the present, to state that as Stanley fondly cherished this universal love, and was ardently enamoured of its development, he derived no inconsiderable

amount of pleasure from the fact of his having broken off the match between his mother and Ripstone; and as each successful exercise of his power increased it, it soon became abundantly clear that he required but the scope to be one of the most absolute tyrants that ever breathed.

The widow, who had imagined that as his years increased he would become more subdued, now had ample cause to feel that the spirit she had fostered in his infancy was each succeeding year gaining strength. He *would* be supreme; he would be consulted upon every domestic matter, however foreign to him it might be, from the most important to the most trivial. She could no longer dress as she pleased. Her taste was impugned, and denounced by him as vulgar in the extreme.

“When will you learn to dress in a becoming style!” he would exclaim. “Upon my honour I’ll not go out with you. Look at that thing, how it hangs!—there’s a fit! You really have no taste. Upon my life, unless you choose to dress a little near the mark, I’ll not go out with you at all.”



And this was decidedly the most potent threat he could possibly hold out; for although she very frequently felt mortified, the pleasure she derived from appearing with him in public was sufficient to heal all the wounds which his tyranny inflicted at home. No mother could have been more proud of her son. The highest delight she had the power to conceive was that which she experienced on being driven round the park by her Stanley. He was so handsome, so elegant, so aristocratic in his bearing; he drove with so much grace; his cab was so attractive, his horse so beautiful; while Bob looked so much like the groom of a peer, that really it was such pleasure to be with him!—nothing could surpass it.

And it was a very stylish turn-out. His horse was full of blood and pride; and while his cab was of the most modern build, Bob was one of the most undeniable tigers that ever sprang.

Of course it was not long before he was surrounded by associates: but however extraordinary to some it may appear, it is nevertheless true that he was free from the most

prevalent vice. He had given dinners to dozens of high-spirited fellows, and had accepted invitations in return ; still in this particular point had he escaped contamination.

The family he visited most frequently at this period was that of Captain Joliffe, the father of his friend Albert, whose cause he had espoused at Eton, and who still entertained for him feelings of the warmest friendship ; and here he soon became a favourite. The Captain himself, although he could not but feel that he was somewhat too inflexible, highly esteemed him, and even applauded him privately for the part he had taken in the rebellion, invariably addressing him as General, in honour of his having been the leader on that occasion ; for he, like every liberal-minded man, strongly felt that the practice of flogging young men in precisely the same fashion as that in which infants are flogged, was, to say the least of it, extremely indelicate. Whether Albert was at home or not, therefore, the Captain was invariably pleased to see the General, and as the pleasure was reciprocal, his visits were frequent.

There was, however, one member of the family who derived peculiar pleasure from these visits, and this was Amelia, the daughter of the Captain, and one of the most elegant, interesting, loveable creatures that ever fascinated man. Amelia, at the period of Stanley's introduction, had just completed her twentieth year. She was not strictly beautiful, although her features were regular, and peculiarly expressive; but she was so graceful, so elegant, so intelligent, yet so gentle, that he who, having conversed with her for an hour, could perceive that she really lacked absolute beauty, must have been dull and cold.

She became attached to Stanley, not indeed from the very moment she saw him; for having associated his expulsion from Eton with the idea of recklessness, she of course had that prejudice so overcome, albeit she was even then struck with the extreme manliness of his bearing, his fine open countenance, and bold expressive eye,—but before she had been long in his society, she regarded him with a love so intense, that her heart absolutely seemed centred in his.

Stanley at once perceived this, for in such a case no prompter is required. No preliminary education is essential to the perfect knowledge of that, for a man becomes master of the language of love at once. No woman who really loves need employ any other. Give her but a moment's opportunity to let her eyes meet those of the object of her love, and their souls at once seem to commune with surpassing eloquence. Of course the practice of "making eyes" is a very different thing altogether. They who resort to this practice are fraudulent bankrupts in love. The timid, soft, involuntary glance alone is entitled to claim an alliance with nature,—a glance which even the eyelids would, but cannot, conceal. Such a glance Stanley received from Amelia as she drew on her glove to retire after dinner on the day of his first introduction, and by that glance he knew that she loved him.

And Stanley loved her. She was the first for whom he had ever entertained an affectionate feeling apart from that which is engendered by consanguinity ; and as of female society he had known till then nothing, it will not be

deemed strange that he should have become at once enamoured of one so amiable, so innocent, so unaffected as Amelia. Had he seen more, or known more, of the influence either of the virtuous or of the abandoned, he might not, and would not have been so immediately susceptible of that sentiment which had taken full possession of his soul ; but being, as he was, uncontaminated and inexperienced, his heart was taken by storm. He did love her : he felt even then that he loved her ; and although that feeling did not subdue his spirit, it appeared to have completely changed its course. Her appearance, moreover, at once forbade him to suppose that she had not those intellectual qualities which are essential to the permanency of affection, and the conversation which he subsequently held with her that evening had the effect of confirming the belief he had inspired, that she was as intelligent as she was gentle ; as confiding as she was pure.

From that day Stanley's visits became constant ; and as Albert was then at home, the lovers had opportunities of conversing with each other almost daily, without exciting the

suspicious of the Captain, from whom Albert advised Stanley to keep the affair at present a secret.

Things, however, were not permitted to go on long thus. Albert was soon to go to Cambridge, when the affair could be kept secret no longer, seeing that Stanley could not then go down, day after day, to the Captain's residence at Richmond without rendering his object apparent. He therefore proposed to himself, first, to convince Albert that delay was altogether unnecessary, secondly, to declare himself to Amelia; and, thirdly, to break the subject to the Captain, which he naturally held to be the most difficult of all.

The first was soon accomplished, and the next day afforded an opportunity for the achievement of the second. Amelia was sitting at the piano; she, Stanley, and Albert only were in the room; and when Albert had received the silent cue, he very correctly went to the door which opened into the lawn, and left the lovers together.

For Stanley this was a most anxious moment and even Amelia felt rather confused and awk-

ward, and ran over the keys with a tremulous hand, and struck an infinite variety of imperfect chords, and played really in the most unscientific manner possible; for it is a striking fact that she absolutely anticipated something bearing the semblance of a declaration at that very moment.

“Miss Joliffe,” said Stanley, after a pause which created a powerful sensation; and he stuck at this point for a second or two, and then resumed,—“That is a very sweet air you were playing.”

“Yes—it—you have heard it before, I believe?” And as she spoke, her eyes involuntarily met his; and she turned very pale, and slightly trembled.

“Amelia,” said Stanley, and their eyes again met, “I cannot be mistaken. We love—yes, I feel that we love each other fondly. Am I not correct? That look renders me happy in the conviction of my proudest anticipation being realised.” And he kissed her fair brow, which in an instant became crimson, as if by magic. “From the moment I first had the happiness to see you,” he continued, pressing



her still tremulous hand with all the fervour of affection, "I have loved—may I not *now* say my own dear Amelia? I am impatient—you will say that I am; but, Amelia, you will consent to my speaking upon this subject to your father?—I knew that you would!" he continued as she slightly—or, as he thought that she slightly—pressed the hand which held hers, and he fervently kissed the hand he held, and said "Bless you, my Amelia!" as Albert, without any strict regard unto the correctness of the tune, but with electric effect, sang, "*And I'm coming! and I'm coming!*" which in itself was strictly proper, inasmuch as the Captain at that very instant appeared upon the lawn.

Stanley therefore retired from the piano with all the ease at his command, while Amelia attempted to play a favourite fantasia; but as she really made very sad havoc of the first dozen bars, she very naturally thought that if she turned over the leaves of her music-book rapidly instead, it would be, under the circumstances, perhaps quite as well.

"Well, General," said the Captain, as he entered with Albert, "we think of going for a ride; will you join us?"

“With pleasure,” replied Stanley, being anxious to relieve Amelia.

“My girl,” cried the Captain, addressing Amelia, “come too; the air will brace you.”

“Not this morning, papa,” said Amelia tremulously.

“You are not well,” said the Captain, as he kissed her. “There, there, run away to your mamma; she will make you more cheerful.”

Amelia was but too happy to leave the room, which she did very promptly, when the horses having been ordered, the General, with the Captain and Albert, mounted at once.

Stanley, in Amelia’s view, never looked so elegant as he did on passing the window of the chamber to which she had retired.

After riding pretty smartly for nearly an hour, the Captain, as usual, pulled up, with the view of talking, while his horse was in a short jolting trot, which, he held, had a more direct tendency not only to strengthen a man’s lungs but to reduce every corporeal exuberance than any other description of exercise. To prove this position, whether disputed or not, he invariably put forth himself as an example; and certainly, while he had no superabundance of

flesh, his lungs were of an order the most powerful. Stanley, however, paid little attention to these distinguishing characteristics at the moment; but embracing the first opportunity that offered, said, "Captain, will you allow me to have five minutes' conversation in the library with you after dinner?"

"Of course! But what is it, General? Out with it now."

"I wish," said Stanley, "to speak quietly on a subject of some importance."

"Ay, I see; and that you can't very comfortably do in a trot. No; very few can; but I have had five-and-twenty years' practice." And the Captain then commenced a long tale, which reached from Richmond to Seringapatam and back, after lashing the Peninsula, the great object of which was to demonstrate that had he not practised the art of talking while trotting, he should have been, years ago, a dead man.

Amelia, who had been anxiously watching their return from the window of her dressing-room, felt her trepidation increase as they entered the gates; for during their absence, although she was unable to conceive what

objection her father could have to one who was in all respects so perfect as Stanley, she had imagined it possible, just possible, that some difficulty might be raised; and that very possibility, unsupported as it appeared to be by anything probable, kept her in a state of the most painful suspense. She however resolved to preserve as tranquil a bearing as possible while at dinner; and Stanley, with the view of relieving her from all embarrassment, addressed nearly the whole of his observations to Mrs. Joliffe, who held him in high admiration.

“Now, General,” said the Captain, when the ladies had retired, “we may as well settle this business here. It is warmer than in the library.” And he drew nearer the fire, as Albert left the room.

“Sir,” said Stanley, “I feel that I shall but awkwardly open this affair.”

“Well, if that be the case, General, come to the point at once.”

“To come, then, at once to the point,” said Stanley; “I love—Amelia.”

The Captain looked at him steadily, and rather sternly for several seconds, when relaxing his

features, he said, "Well, well, there is nothing very incorrect in that. And you wish to propose—eh? *That*, I presume, is the point."

"It is," returned Stanley; "and your consent will not, I hope, be withheld."

"Why—why," said the Captain, pursing his lips very thoughtfully, and filling his glass, "my girl is a good girl; but then she is young—very young; you are both very young. However, Stanley, this is my answer: I have myself no objection to you personally; on the contrary, I admire your character, as far as I have seen it developed. If, therefore, you can prove to me—what indeed I have at present no reason to doubt—that you are in a position to support my girl in a style to which she has ever been accustomed,—(for, being a poor soldier, I can give her but little,)—I will consent to your marriage, provided of course, that all parties will be willing to sign the contract,—in five or six years."

Five or six years! Had the Captain said five or six thousand, it would not have struck

Stanley as being more absurd. "Five or six years !" he exclaimed, on recovering from the state of astonishment into which it had thrown him, for it really seemed for the moment to have taken away his breath. "Five or six years! You are not serious, I presume?"

"Indeed I never was more serious in my life. Would you marry my daughter now?—you, who have seen nothing, absolutely nothing, of the world! Why, sir, it would be about the most insane act of which you could by any possibility be guilty."

"But five or six years !" repeated Stanley, to whom it still appeared an age. "*Why* five or six years?"

"Understand me," replied Captain Joliffe. "I have lived a long time in the world, and know something of the passions by which men are actuated; something of the rocks upon which men split, and of the temptations to which they are exposed. I never will, consent, therefore, to the marriage of my daughter with any man, however brilliant may

be his prospects, unless he has seen at least something of the world; nor would any father, who has seen what I have seen, and who has the happiness of his child at heart, as I have, God bless her! Take my advice; think of marrying no one until you have had five or six years more experience; and then, as you will know many thousand things, of which you cannot now even dream, you will come to me, and say, if I should live so long, ‘I feel that you have been my best friend;’ and you will have cause to feel it till you sink into the grave, and your children will have reason to bless me.”

“But why not say one year?” urged Stanley. “On reflection you must yourself admit that five is an immense length of time.”

“Believe me, Stanley, to be your friend when I state that I am inflexible upon this point namely, that nothing shall induce me to consent to your marriage with Amelia in less than five years; therefore fill your glass and say no more about it. Continue to come as usual. I shall at all times be happy to see you—if possible, more so, than ever I have been; but



don't cherish a thought that any power upon earth can shake my expressed determination. But come, come, come, let us join the people above. Reflect on what I have said, and be wise."

## CHAPTER VI.

PROVES HOW POWERFUL SOPHISTRY IS WHEN AN  
ELOPEMENT IS THE OBJECT PROPOSED.

As Stanley entered the drawing-room with the Captain, Amelia rivetted her eyes upon him with an expression of anxiety the most intense. Her fondest hopes were not to be realized!—she felt in an instant that they were not; his features betrayed the disappointment he had experienced, and she burst into tears.

“Amelia! Amelia!” whispered Albert, who had been endeavouring to amuse her during the conference below. “Courage, my girl, courage!”

Amelia strove to conceal her tears, and succeeded in doing so effectually from her father; but Stanley in a moment perceived her agitation, and therefore assumed an air of comparative content, which somewhat relieved her.

"You have no thought of leaving us to-night, General, have you?" said the Captain, as gaily as if nothing had transpired.

"I have ordered my cab at ten," replied Stanley, "as I must be in town early in the morning."

"Well, you will dine with us to-morrow?"

Stanley bowed; and although Amelia conceived that bow to be somewhat too distant, she was unable to reconcile the tone of her father with the idea of his having withheld his consent. She therefore panted between hope and fear until Stanley embraced an opportunity of joining her at the table at which she was apparently reading, when he communicated the result of his conference with the Captain, who, with his lady, had just commenced a game of chess.

"Then why did you look so serious?" said Amelia, when Stanley had explained. "You cannot conceive how much you alarmed me!"

"Five years!" whispered Stanley. "It is an age!"

"Oh, the time will quickly pass," said Amelia; "and we shall have, I hope, many, very

many happy hours in each other's society in the interim. It is not as if we were to be separated for five years."

At this moment Stanley's cab was announced, and although he soon after took leave with great gentleness, in driving to town he developed all the wild impetuosity of his nature.

Bob occupied the smallest conceivable space in the extreme corner of the vehicle. He perceived at a glance that there was something rather wrong, and winked, with a view to the acknowledgment of the quickness of his perception, several times in dark parts of the road. The horse flew over the ground with unparalleled swiftness; for albeit the whip was not used, an occasionally angry *whiss!* seemed to strike the conviction into him that nothing less than lightning speed would do; and hence, on reaching town, his wide crimson nostrils were expanded to the utmost stretch, while his neck, back, and haunches, were covered with foam.

Five years! Stanley felt it impossible to wait five: pooh! he could not, he *would* not! Yet what could be done? Why, what must be done in such a case? And yet Amelia was a gentle,

patient creature, whom he knew the idea of an elopement would shock. No matter : she loved him—he firmly believed that she loved him fondly, passionately ; and this was, in his view, sufficient to justify the attempt.

On the following day, therefore, he started again for Richmond ; and as he then appeared to be somewhat more tranquil, Bob did what he dared not do at the time, namely, venture to intimate something which had reference to his strong disapproval of the state of *his* horse the night preceding. An angry glance from Stanley, however, convinced him that it was not even then a safe course to pursue, and he, therefore, under the circumstances, wisely held his peace.

On his arrival, Stanley found the Captain out, and Amelia walking thoughtfully in the garden. She appeared to be somewhat dejected, while her beautiful Italian greyhound had dropped his tail, and was looking in the face of his gentle mistress with all the intelligence of which those animals are capable, apparently with the view of ascertaining what weighed upon her heart.

“Amelia!” cried Stanley; and she turned and flew to meet him, and the dog, as it bounded up the path, seemed filled with delight.

“I scarcely expected this happiness to-day,” said Amelia, smiling as she blushed. “I much feared that my dear father—that is—but come, come, you must not be impatient! We are yet young. The time will swiftly fly away, will it not?”

“Amelia,” said Stanley, still holding her hands, and watching her eyes intently, “I cannot wait five years.”

“Come, you must not speak so,” said Amelia, gaily, “I shall really begin to be jealous if you do.”

“Then you cannot really love me. Where love is, there confidence also must be; and confidence and jealousy cannot co-exist.

“Then,” said Amelia, who never dreamed of opposing anything he advanced. “Then I never can be jealous, for I do love you—dearly!”

“If then you love me——”

“*If!*” interrupted Amelia, playfully pouting her beautiful lips.

“Well, then, *as* you love me, you will not deny me one favour.”

“What is it?”

“Nay, nay!—you must promise me first.”

“My Stanley, I will promise. Secure in your honour and the purity of every motive by which you are guided, I feel that I can’t deny you nothing. What is it?”

Stanley paused. He felt that he might be too precipitate, and therefore at length said,

“My dearest love, I will tell you—before I leave.”

“No, now: pray, pray, tell me now: it is cruel to keep me in suspense.”

“Amelia, we are, as you have said, both young. It is hence that your father named this odious five years’ probation; but why should we waste in doubts and fears the sweetest hours of our youth, the very period at which we are most susceptible of happiness?—why, why, my love, when we have that happiness within our reach should we fail to embrace it?”

“I admit,” said Amelia, “that it appears a long time: but then, perhaps, you will be able



to prevail on papa to name a somewhat shorter period."

"Impossible! The last words he uttered when conversing on this subject were that he was upon this point inflexible; that nothing on earth could alter his expressed determination. Why then should this be? Granted we are young: what brilliant examples have we of the union of persons under *precisely* similar circumstances! Why should *we* be forbidden to act like others? Why should the ban be peculiarly upon us? My Amelia!—do you believe that we shall be happy?"

"Indeed, indeed, I do; oh, most happy!"

"Then why not at once?—Amelia," he continued, as he perceived her eyes suddenly droop, "you understand me. I have done all that a man of honour could do. I have solicited—earnestly solicited—your hand from the hands of your father, who has consented to our union, but with a proviso which both you and I deem unnecessary, if not unjust. What more can I do? My love, I can do no more, and therefore,

as we cannot at once, *with* his consent, be united, there is but one course which, in justice to ourselves——”

“Stanley—Stanley!” cried Amelia, “do not name it. As you love me say no more on the subject, I beseech you! I cannot, must not, *dare* not entertain the thought.”

“Reflect, my sweet Amelia; reflect calmly upon the subject. I do not require an answer now!—say a week hence—a month!”

“My Stanley, I will not *love* you if you urge this matter further. Indeed, you must never allude to it again. A year, a century, would be insufficient to win my consent to that. But you are not serious! Say that you were but jesting, and I will love you more dearly than ever.”

“Amelia, I cannot say that. I *am* serious.”

“Oh Stanley; consider well what it is you would have me do! Think of my dear father and of my mother, my kind, fond mother, whose affection for me is, and ever has been, most ardent! You *would* not have me utterly destroy that affection?”

“I would not,” replied Stanley.

“I knew it! I knew that you would not. Oh, forgive me for having had the thought.”

“But, my love, you take a superficial view of this matter. Your mother might weep, and your father might be angry; but all this would be but ephemeral. They would soon become reconciled.”

“Never, Stanley, never! My poor mother indeed, *might*, if her heart were not broken by the shock; but my father never would! Oh, Stanley, Stanley, banish the thought for ever, I never can, I never *will*——”

“When you are calm, my love; reflect when you are calm.”

“I am calm,” rejoined Amelia firmly; “quite calm. I love you—you know that I love you—most fondly; but never, Stanley, never will I take that step.”

Stanley said no more. He dropped his hands, which still held hers; and having led her across the lawn into the parlour, he stood over her in silence for some moments, when, kissing her brow affectionately, he left her in tears.

He paced the lawn for some considerable time

in deep thought. He could not tell what course to pursue. Eventually, however, he walked round to the stables, ordered his cab, and drove towards town. On the road he met the Captain, who endeavoured to prevail upon him to return; but, without the slightest manifestation of disappointment, he declined and drove on.

Poor Amelia had no idea of his having left. As she sat absorbed in tears she expected him every moment to re-enter the room. She dried her eyes, and looked again and again towards the lawn. She could not see him. She went into the garden. No Stanley was there. He surely could *not* have left her so! She would not believe that he had. Even when she ascertained that he had driven off, she felt sure that he would shortly return; but when the Captain came home and explained that he had seen him, her worst fears were realised, and although she laboured hard, and to some extent successfully, to conceal her emotion, the thought of his having left her under the circumstances without a word, was the most bitter pang she had ever endured.

She had still, however, the hope of seeing him on the morrow; but then the morrow came without Stanley. Well, surely on the next day! The next day also came without Stanley; and the next and the next: a week, which seemed a year, passed, but Stanley did not come.

The Captain thought it strange, and sent Albert to ascertain if he were ill: but excuses came back without Stanley. Another week passed. The Captain sent no more. He began to regard it as a matter of extreme delicacy under the circumstances; and Albert left for Cambridge.

Amelia now called into action all the power she possessed, with the view of enabling her to bear up against it. But then the thought of having lost him for ever! The third week passed. The colour left her cheeks: her eyes lost their wonted fire—her spirits their usual buoyancy: yet what could be done? She felt that to write to *him* would be incorrect; and yet could there be anything very indelicate in the pursuit of such a course? When a month had passed she could endure it no longer. She

would write, and did to the following effect:—

“MY DEAR STANLEY,

“If Amelia be not utterly despised you will come down to Richmond at once. Oh! Stanley, I cannot endure it. I am distracted. It is cruel, very cruel. My heart is too full to say more, but believe me to be still your most affectionate, although almost broken-hearted

“AMELIA.”

On the receipt of this, Stanley—albeit he could not help feeling its force—experienced more than that common satisfaction which springs from the success of a deeply laid scheme. It developed precisely that state of mind to which he had been ardently anxious to bring her. He had kept away expressly in order to prove that he had enslaved her by making her feel that his absence was intolerable. He therefore detained the servant whom she had secretly despatched, and wrote the following answer:—

“MY OWN SWEET GIRL,

“You are still, and ever will be, dearer to me than life; but my absence has been prompted by the conviction, that during the probationary period which has been named, and which, indeed, you have sanctioned, it were better, as that period *must* elapse, for us to communicate with each other as seldom as possible, lest I may be tempted to renew those solicitations which appear to be so utterly abhorrent to your feelings. I will, however, as you desire it, drive down in the morning, when I hope to find you perfectly well.

“I am, my Amelia, still your own

“STANLEY.”

This greatly relieved her. It reanimated her hopes. She felt that she was still beloved by him whom she adored, and was comparatively happy; and when he came the next morning she endeavoured to smile with her accustomed sweetness, and forbore to employ even the accents of reproof; but Stanley perceived that she had endured the most intense mental



agony, and that, as he was still most affectionately attentive, she loved him if possible more fondly than before.

The subject was not renewed. Not a syllable having reference to his absence passed his lips, save to the Captain, to whom he made certain specious excuses. He dined there; and as he endeavoured to enslave her still more by calling up all his powers of fascination, he left her so happy! He went the next day and the next; still not a single syllable on the subject breathed; but, on the day following that, he renewed the attack, having found that he had so completely gained her heart as to render resistance improbable in the extreme.

"My dear Amelia," said he, as they sat in the arbour; "I cannot of course tell, love, how *you* feel; but really, in your society, I experience such happiness!"

"Indeed, my Stanley, it is mutual," said Amelia. "It is hence that your absence induced so much anguish."

"Why, then," said Stanley, "should we ever be absent from each other? Amelia!

forgive me ; but I feel that I must again urge my suit. I must again try to prevail upon you to listen to that which——’

“ Stanley, Stanley !” said Amelia, bursting into tears ; “ pray, pray do not mention that subject again.”

“ I know your extreme delicacy,” he continued, “ and appreciate it highly ; but let me reason with you for a moment. You believe that your parents have your happiness at heart ?”

“ Oh ! yes,” replied Amelia. “ Of that I am convinced.”

“ How then can you believe that they would be angry to see you happy ?”

“ I do not,” said Amelia. “ I feel that nothing could impart to them greater delight.”

“ Then you do not expect to be happy with me ?”

“ O Stanley ! you know I feel sure that our happiness would be perfect.”

“ Then how can you suppose that when they see that you are happy, their anger will last ?”

Amelia’s head drooped, and she was silent.

“ Come,” continued Stanley, “ come, look at

this matter in a rational point of view. I believe, fully believe, their affection to be firm; but I cannot associate firmness with the love which one venial act of disobedience can for ever destroy. My sweet girl! confide in me! —All, all, will be well. Come say, my love, say that you will at once be mine!”

“O Stanley!” cried Amelia, who was able to resist no longer, “you are indeed my soul’s guide. You will be kind to me, my love? Oh, yes!—I feel, I know that you will be *kind* to me.”

“This *is* a moment of happiness! Now do I feel that you love me indeed! My dear girl, words are insufficient to express the ardour of my affection: my life shall be devoted to prove it. Prepare, my sweet, at once. Let our happiness to-morrow be complete. Once over, and all will be well. I may *depend* upon your firmness!”

“Stanley, I will be firm!”

They then returned from the arbour, and after dinner, Stanley having delivered into her hands a paper containing a few brief instructions, and extorted from her another declaration

that her mind was made up, left, with the view of making the arrangements which were essential to the performance of the highly important business of the morrow.

The morrow came ; and at ten o'clock Stanley was at breakfast at an inn at Richmond ; and at eleven a lady closely veiled, enveloped in a bronze satin cloak, and attended by a servant, inquired for Mr. Fitzgerald, and was immediately shown—according to instructions—into the room which Stanley occupied. He received this lady with great formality, and directed the waiter, by whom she had been introduced, to send his servant up immediately ; but the moment they were alone, Stanley embraced her, exclaiming, “ My noble girl ! now have I proved your devotion.”

“ My Stanley,” said Amelia, who trembled with great violence, and looked pale as death as she spoke,—“ thus far—thus far, have I kept my word ; but on my knees, I implore you to urge me no further.”

“ *Hush !*” cried Stanley, raising her as Bob, who knew his cue, knocked at the door. “ Confide in me, my sweet wife !—Still, still confide

in me! Come in," he added, and Bob most respectfully entered, hat in hand.

With all possible delicacy, and with innumerable cheering expressions, Stanley proceeded to divest Amelia of her bonnet and cloak, which he placed with great tact upon Bob, who appeared to be inexpressibly delighted. He was, it is true, somewhat shorter than Amelia; but that was of no great importance, as it merely made his train a little longer, and while he felt that the style of the bonnet became him well, he held the muff in the most lady-like manner imaginable.

While Bob was uniting the little hooks and eyes from the top to the very bottom of the cloak, with the laudable view of concealing his boots effectually, Stanley was preparing Amelia's disguise—Bob's hat and his own roquelaure.

"Now," said Stanley, "let us see, sir, how much like a lady you can walk." And Bob paced the room with all the dignity and grace at his command, although he occasionally turned to look at his train, and laughed with infinite enthusiasm while Stanley was endeavouring to

raise the spirits of Amelia, who had sunk into a chair in a state of exhaustion.

“My dear, sweet girl!” cried Stanley, “have confidence: have courage. Be assured that we shall both have cause to bless this happy day. Now,” he continued, addressing Bob, “you know, sir, what you have to do; take care that you do it well.”

“I will, sir. God bless you, miss,” said Bob, “I wish you joy, and many happy returns;” and having curtsied, and veiled himself closely, he walked with due elegance from the inn, promptly followed by the Captain’s servant.

Stanley had no sooner seen Bob safely off, than he completed Amelia’s disguise, rang for the bill, and ordered his cab to be brought to the door as soon as possible; and as the waiter saw Bob, as he believed, upon a chair with his hat on, he naturally inferred that he had been taken very suddenly ill, and hence proceeded at once to obey orders. The horse was already harnessed. He had *but* to be put to; and when the bill was brought, the cab was at the door. Stanley, therefore, in

an instant settled the amount; and to the great admiration of the attendants, who regarded him as a kind and most considerate master, assisted poor Amelia with great care into the cab, stepped round, seized the reins, and drove off.



## CHAPTER VII.

## BOB TAKES HIS PEDESTRIAN TOUR INCOG.

WHEN James, the devoted servant by whom Amelia had been attended to the inn, followed Bob, he did not entertain the smallest doubt about his being his young mistress ; for while he knew the cloak and bonnet so remarkably well, that he could have sworn conscientiously to either, Bob walked with indisputable elegance and ease—a fact which will by no means be considered extraordinary on its being announced that Stanley had trained him throughout the whole of the previous night, by making him pace the widow's drawing-room clad in her habiliments, until he became satisfied with the graceful character of his carriage, which could not in the nature of things

happen, albeit the practice was extremely severe, until just as the day began to dawn.

In consequence of this training, Bob naturally felt somewhat fatigued ; but it must not be presumed that this circumstance tended, even in the slightest degree, to subdue his spirit. On the contrary, he gloried in the performance of the task ; he held it to be a thing in which his honour was involved, and felt proud of having been chosen to play a part so peculiarly important. But the particular consideration from which he derived the greatest pleasure, was that of *how* he should work the respectable victim behind him. He was able to dive to some considerable depth into the thoughts, the secret thoughts of that individual ; and as he had a peculiarly aristocratic contempt for him, —holding him as he did, notwithstanding his cockade, to be in the social scale, one chalk below him—he resolved to make him feel before he had done with him, that in life there are positions more congenial to the feelings of a respectable person than that which he occupied then.

*In limine*, however, Bob had one great diffi-

culty to surmount : he knew nothing of the vicinity of Richmond. He had a perfect knowledge only of the direct road to town, and as he wished to avoid going that way, he had turned round by Petersham Rise on speculation ; but as to the point to which it led, or to which it was likely to lead, he was in a state of the most absolute ignorance. He nevertheless went to the bottom boldly, and made a little turn to the right ; but as he found that the very narrow path he was pursuing had a tendency to lead him back to Richmond, he branched off at once to the left, and thus approached the noble porch of a magnificent edifice, the appearance of which struck him as being so extraordinary that he stopped, partly in order to lose a little time, and partly with a view of lavishing upon that edifice looks of admiration. The particular architectural order of this noble fane—and nothing *can* be more correct than to state, without any unnecessary delay, that it was Petersham church before which he stopped—is peculiarly its own. It is neither Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, nor Composite ; nor does it belong to any of those three which modern architects

in their wantonness have designated Gothic, French, and Persian. It forms an order of itself, which, moreover, never has been, and probably never will be, copied in any civilised part of the globe. Bob viewed its extraordinary steeple, which "pointing to the skies," stands boldly in the full development of its height, which being nearly three feet and three quarters from its base to its ball, forcibly strikes, even in the present day, the eyes of all beholders. He then directed his attention to the wonderful tower upon which it stands in all its glory; and having with critical minuteness examined the twelve triumphal turrets, composed of antique bricks and mortar, by which the tower itself is surmounted, he was about to take a view of the glorious ecclesiastical chimney, of which the pot pretty nearly reaches the summit of the noble cupola, when Sir Samuel Ray, whom he had often seen at the Captain's house, and whom he knew to be on terms of extreme intimacy with the family, turned into the passage in which he was standing.

Bob was startled. What was to be done in this extremity? If he met him. Sir Samuel

was certain to speak ; and if he walked back, Sir Samuel was certain to follow. He had not much time then to turn over many ideas in his mind, and therefore resolved at once to cut Sir Samuel dead.

He accordingly gathered up his veil in treble flutes, with the view of making his face as invisible as possible, and walked on ; and as Sir Samuel raised his hat in the similitude of a preliminary to some highly-complimentary greeting, Bob tossed his head proudly, and averting his face, passed on with an air of disdain the most superb.

Sir Samuel looked—of course he looked ; and so did James, who, nevertheless, felt perfectly justified in touching his hat to Sir Samuel, conceiving, as he did very wisely, that he had nothing to do with any misunderstanding that might have arisen between them. Still he could not but look ; for he thought it very remarkable, especially as the existence of any such misunderstanding was a circumstance of which he was altogether unconscious.

Having arrived at the end of the church-passage, to his entire satisfaction, Bob turned

to the right, and went on until he saw some white gates, which he entered, in the perfect conviction that the avenue before him led somewhere. Up this avenue, accordingly he walked, and on reaching the top, found another to the left, which had no gravelled path; and as it had rained almost incessantly during the three preceding weeks, the narrow track which pedestrians had established by wearing away the grass, was particularly filthy. Instead, however, of being induced by this circumstance to retrace his steps, Bob proceeded, and soon found it a source of great comfort to him, seeing that James' shoes were long-quartered and very thin, and his hose were of the purest virgin whiteness. On, therefore, he went, slipping about in all directions, for the path was very boggy, and the mud was very greasy, and James followed him, although it really turned the whole of his notions of cleanliness completely inside out. He tried at first to pick his way with great presence of mind, and did for a time hop about with much energy; but when, having got into the thick of it, the mud had sucked his right shoe off, and nearly filled

it, he gave the affair up as hopeless, and took the bogs as they came with the most exemplary resignation, although he did undeniably perspire at every pore; for whenever a part presented itself of a character more filthy than the parts adjacent, that part Bob invariably took.

By dint of extraordinary perseverance they eventually arrived at the end of this avenue, and having passed the gates there established, found themselves upon Ham Common, where a posse of little raggamuffins made some remarks upon the disgusting state of James's white stockings, which James, however, treated with appropriate contempt, being unable to leave his post although it is not by any means clear that he would have borne it so tranquilly had he been alone.

On reaching the common, Bob, instead of going round by the pond on the right, like a decent respectable Christian, went straight over the grass, making each footstep visible six inches deep, while every hole thus made was immediately filled up with water.

To affirm that James approved of this pro-



ceeding were to affirm that which is not particularly true. He did not ; but then how could he act ? How could he help himself ? Having reached, however, as nearly as possible the middle of the common, he saw a small hope near the horizon riding gallantly on a cloud, which bore a remarkably black threatening aspect. This he hailed as a blessing, and stepping a little closer to Bob, said, with all due humility, " I beg pardon, Miss,—but if you please, I think we're going to have a shower."

Of this Bob took no other notice than that of tossing his head superciliously.

" Well," observed James to himself, somewhat piqued, " I only mentioned it. Let her catch her death if she likes—what do I care ? Let her be laid up for a month with the rheumatiz—what's it to me ? I only wish she wasn't a-going for to take such a tower."

This last observation was excessively natural, and much to the purpose ; for he really began to think that they had already walked quite far enough, taking all things into consideration, including the mud. Bob, however, was decidedly not of this opinion, and hence he kept

straight on until he reached the other side of the common, when he turned very deliberately to the right, and having passed through a gate, which an old woman had opened with a very low curtesy, he got at once into a sort of lane, which promised, greatly to his satisfaction, to be a long one.

“Well,” said James, who really felt tired, for beyond all dispute, the process of walking any great distance slowly is fatiguing, “I should like to know how much further she’s a-going. I hope she’ll have enough on it afore she gets home.”

This acute observation did not reach Bob, —and if it had, it would not have made even the smallest difference; for he felt at that moment more highly pleased than ever, having just turned a little to the left, and found himself in another long lane, which appeared to have no end at all.

After walking down this lane for about a mile and a half, James began to look at the thing very seriously indeed. Had he known how far he had to go, or even where, without any immediate reference to the distance, or any-

thing, however slight, about it, he would not have cared so much; but called upon as he was, to walk on and on, at the rate of about half a mile an hour, in a state of utter darkness as to where he was going, and without any earthly object in view than that of continuing to follow, it was really so dreadfully tiresome, that he himself began to wonder how flesh and blood could stand it.

Where was she off to? What could she have got into her head? When did she mean to turn? What time could she expect to get back? These were questions which he found it impossible to solve. It was a profound mystery to him. He could not fathom it at all! for Bob still kept on, the grace and dignity of his deportment being interfered with only by an occasional convulsive, but half-suppressed chuckle.

At length the ancient town of Kingston met their view, and the spirits of the victim did somewhat revive. "At all events," said he, "this is the end of the tower, and *may* her legs ache well afore she gets back." The probability of such an occurrence in some degree

restored him to good humour, and he drew off his gloves to put up his collar, and to raise his cravat, with the view of making himself appear as respectable under the circumstances as possible; but no sooner had they entered the town than Bob deliberately turned into the King's Arms public-house, and called for a glass of hot brandy and water.

James, who stood at the door, looked amazed. Hewasperfectlybewildered. He peeped in again and again, and saw Bob at the bar, with the glass to his lips. What! a delicate and highly-accomplished young lady bounce boldly into a common public-house, call for a glass of hot brandy and water, and drink it at the bar! He could have relished a little himself certainly, for he felt very faint; but the idea!

"I say," said he to a coach-porter standing near the door,—“I say, get us a pint of ale; I'm fit to drop. *Good luck* to you, make haste!”

The porter darted into the house with all possible speed; when Bob, who knew as well what they were after as they did themselves, unexpectedly finished his glass and walked out.

The porter followed with the ale very promptly. "Give us *hold*," cried James, in an energetic whisper. "Only let's have one pull." And he accordingly on the instant seized the pot; but in his eagerness, not only poured a portion of the beverage over his collar and cravat, and down the bosom of his shirt, thus spoiling the respectability of his appearance altogether, but the first mouthful went "the wrong way!"—a slight accident, which made him spurt and cough with unequivocal violence. "Catch hold!" said he, as soon as he had recovered the power to speak. "Here, *give* us the change—quick!" when straining to keep down his cough as the hot water streamed from his eyes he continued to follow Bob, who highly enjoyed it.

This alone was enough for a man like James, but when he had sufficiently recovered himself to see his way with distinctness, a feeling of horror crept over him on perceiving that Bob was still going *from* Richmond.

"Why, what—why—why—where is she off to *now*!" he exclaimed, as they passed over the bridge. "If this isn't a comfort, I don't

know what is. Who *would* be a servant? But never mind, *she'll* soon give in, for all she has had a glass of brandy and water. I wonder she ain't beastly; but they'll smell my lady; they're safe to find her out when she gets home: that's one consolation, anyhow. But let's just see now, how far she *will* go. I'll warrant I'll keep it up as long as she can. Let her walk on. Who cares? Let's just see, now, who'll be the first to give in."

Unconscious of this manly challenge, Bob still pursued his course; but the spirit of the challenger was quickly subdued.

"Where can she be going?" he exclaimed in despair. "It is all very fine, but—Well," he continued, clutching a newly-created hope with surpassing promptitude and tightness, "she must ride back; that's quite clear."

This hope was, however, strangled in its earliest infancy, for Bob at that moment turned into Bushy Park, which, in the judgment of James, was more monstrous than all, for he happened to know the extent of that park, and Bob walked about as leisurely as if he had not been then more than a hundred yards from

home. He kept to no particular path, but wandered here and there, as his fickle fancy happened to change. He at one time got very near the Hampton-Court gate, but he turned back, and walked round and round the park again, until James worked himself into such a state of mental excitement that he absolutely made up his mind to do something.

“I *will* speak! I’ll speak, if I lose my place!” he cried firmly. “They can’t be off giving me a character.” And he cleared his throat desperately, and shook his head with a reckless air, and said to Bob boldly, “If you please, Miss, it’s getting very late.”

“Fellor!” cried Bob, in a tone of virtuous indignation. “How dare you address a lady, fellor? What do you mean, sir, by follerin’ of me?”

James stood aghast! It was *not* his young mistress! Really his state of mind became dreadful, as the conviction flashed vividly across his active brain that he had been following a strange lady: he felt in fact perfectly paralysed.

“I—I—I beg pardon, ma’am,” he eventually muttered; “but it’s quite a mistake.”



"A mistake," cried Bob, "you imperent fellor, you! For two pins I'd give you in charge for a nuisance."

Bob said no more. He felt that he had said quite enough, and therefore tossing his head with superb *hauteur*, left James in a state of bewilderment so absolute that the whole of his intellectual functions appeared to be deranged.

"Well," said he, when his faculties were a little restored, "here's a go! Here have I been the whole of this here blessed morning a-following and a-following that creature there miles after miles, like a fool; and when all comes to all, it ain't her! Why, when I tell 'em they won't believe me; I wouldn't believe myself if I wasn't myself. Sha'n't I catch it? I ought to have known it wasn't her. Is it likely that *she* would have waded through the muck all these miles? Is it anything like anything likely? Not a bit of it! Jim, you're an ass!"

Having arrived at this highly-satisfactory conclusion, he proceeded to retrace his steps; but before he had reached the gates he suddenly conceived an idea.

“It was her cloak,” said he, stopping remarkably short. “I’ll take my solemn oath to the cloak.”

At this moment the whole affair struck him as being most extraordinary, and, as the force with which it struck him turned his head completely round, he beheld Bob in the distance assuming a variety of inelegant and unladylike attitudes, holding his back and sides as if in laughing convulsions, and twisting, and stooping, and slapping his knees in a state of unadulterated rapture.

“She stole it! I’ll lay my life she stole it!” cried James, and he instantly took upon himself the entire responsibility of running back.

Bob saw him coming, and inferred therefrom that his suspicions had been awakened; and, as he had not the slightest desire to be identified, he instantly started off; but, being totally unaccustomed to run in a lady’s cloak, although he had in his time jumped in a sack very cleverly, he found that it materially impeded his progress. For the first hundred yards he held it up with great success; but as it dropped while he endeavoured to adjust the

veil, which annoyed him, he stepped upon it, and down he went heavily. He cared not, however, two straws about that. It was not in his nature to give in. He scrambled up again in an instant, but in doing so, tore the front breadths all to ribbons. He could do nothing at all with the little hooks and eyes; they could not be prevailed upon to separate; and hence, as James was gaining fast upon him, he at once tore the cloak completely off, and left that, with the little muff, behind him.

James now saw the figure of a man in top-boots, and became more than ever convinced that an audacious larceny had been committed. He therefore passed the abandoned muff and cloak which were lying upon the grass, with the laudable view of securing the delinquent; but as Bob now threw off his bonnet—seeing that, in the first place he could run before the wind much more swiftly without it, and being, in the second, convinced that it would be well taken care of by James, who would thereby save him a great deal of trouble,—he darted off at a speed which outstripped that of the

victim, to whose view he was very soon lost among the trees.

For some considerable time James hunted about with due severity of aspect. He felt perfectly certain that he in the tops was not far off: nor was he. Bob was up one of the chestnut trees, perched upon a branch, from which he was able to look on securely. But then James was not aware of this at all. The possibility of such a thing never entered his vivid imagination. He looked round and round the trunks with all his characteristic cunning, and flew from tree to tree like a wild individual; but the idea of looking an inch above his head never entered that head for an instant.

Under these peculiar circumstances, therefore, it will not be considered very marvellous that he failed to find Bob. That he did not approve of being baffled is a fact which at the time was abundantly obvious, for he clenched his fists desperately, and looked very severe; but as reason eventually came to his aid, he felt impressed with the conviction of its being, as a general rule, useless to look for that which

there is no chance of finding, and therefore left the vicinity of the chestnut-tree, and gathered together the bonnet, muff, and cloak, with the view of taking them back as trophies to Richmond.

Bob, from his elevated position watched him fairly out of the park, and then descended. He was, of course, inexpressibly delighted ; but as he felt very hungry, he made for the nearest public-house, where he ordered a rump-steak smothered in onions. He then had another glass of brandy and water, and afterwards got the ostlers around him, and treated them with innumerable pots of half-and half, and screws beyond all human calculation ; called for songs ; sang himself ; proposed the health of his master and new mistress, which was drunk enthusiastically again and again ; and thus, being about as happy as a prince, he laughed, smoked, drank, and sang, until his head very suddenly dropped upon the table, when the kind-hearted host, in consideration of his having paid like a gentleman for what he had ordered, had him carefully carried up to bed, in a state of the most absolute oblivion.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## STANLEY'S TRIP TO GRETN GREEN.

WITH all possible speed Stanley drove up to town, and on his arrival in Regent Street dashed into a yard, where he found in perfect readiness a travelling carriage, into which he at once handed Amelia from the cab.

“Pray, pray, my dear Stanley, I beseech you—pray, let me go home!” said the trembling girl, in accents the most touching, as she entered the carriage.

“My dearest!—why, surely you would not return now?”

“Oh, yes! Indeed, indeed my courage fails me. Mamma will be so dreadfully alarmed. *Do* let me return. You cannot tell, Stanley, how dearly I will love you—you cannot, indeed!”

“My Amelia, I believe that you love me now. You *must* not endeavour to make me feel that you do not repose in me that confidence which is the very essence of love.”

Amelia sank back in the carriage, and sobbed like a child.

The horses were put to, and the female servant, whom the post-master had provided, had taken her seat on the box; all, therefore, being ready, the postilions mounted, Stanley joined Amelia, and the carriage dashed out of the yard.

For the first three stages Amelia was in tears. Stanley employed all his eloquence, which was not inconsiderable, with the view of enforcing his sophistries, which were at all times most specious, but in vain. He tried with all the power of which he was capable to wean her thoughts from home, but without any sensible effect, until vexation caused him to be gloomy and silent when Amelia turned to cheer *him*.

“My Stanley,” she cried, “why are you so dull? If you repent of this step, my love, believe me I shall be overjoyed. Let us return even now.”



“Amelia, if I am hateful in your sight, if you feel that you cannot confide in my honour, I will; but if we do return, never must we see each other more. I have not repented—I feel that I never can repent; but when I see you so cold, so exclusively occupied with the consideration of the sacrifice you have made, that you cannot devote a single smile, look, word, or thought to me, I should be stone, my Amelia, if I did not feel the slight most acutely.”

“Forgive me! I do not think that I have made any sacrifice—I do not indeed! But I cannot help thinking of poor dear mamma!” And fresh tears gushed forth, which she hastened to conceal. “But,” she added, “you will not be dull? I know that I am weak; but you will not be angry?”

“I cannot, my love. Although you do try to vex me by being a little coward, you know that I cannot be angry with you.”

“Well, well, I will summon more courage,” and she again sobbed while striving to assume an air of gaiety. “I will *not* vex you thus, and then you will talk to me, Stanley, will you not? Yes—and then we shall be happy. I

have but you now—I have no soul on earth to confide in but you! There!—now you look yourself again! You are not like my Stanley when you are dull.” And she adjusted the curls which partly concealed his fine forehead, as his face brightened into a smile.

Thus by assuming an air of coldness, and making her feel that he was jealous of her thoughts, he restored her to apparent contentment, albeit even then her heart was ready to break.

As the evening drew near, Stanley desired the servant to get inside the carriage, ostensibly in order that she might not catch cold, but in reality in consideration of Amelia, with whose delicacy he was perfectly well acquainted. During the night, however, Amelia slept but little. Her mind was on the rack, and even when she did sleep her dreams were of a nature to induce her to keep awake as much as possible. Stanley did all in his power to diminish the fatigue of the journey. He procured a pack of cards and a small table, upon which they played for hours, while the servant held the lamp; and when tired of playing, he read

an amusing book aloud, told a variety of interesting anecdotes,—in short, all that a man could do he did to raise her spirits, and to prove that he had her happiness at heart.

They stopped but little on the road. Stanley placed great reliance upon the tact and dexterity of Bob, and felt certain that, even in the event of the disguise being discovered, he would not suffer his attendant to return before the evening ; he was however far too good a general not to follow up the advantage he had gained, and hence he calculated not upon the probability alone, but upon the bare possibility of an accident.

At length they reached Carlisle, and Stanley felt they were then quite safe ; but he would not even then stop for any refreshment, although it was 3 P. M. and they had had but a biscuit and a glass of wine since six o'clock that morning. As they had, however, but nine miles farther to go—it was of little importance ; and, as Stanley was most anxious to have the ceremony over, in order that his mind might be perfectly at ease, he ordered a change as quickly as possible,—and the facility with which

those worthies at Carlisle can change horses if they like, is truly astonishing,—and off they started again.

They had scarcely, however, got three miles from Carlisle when Stanley, who was continually on the look-out, saw in the distance a carriage and four dashing towards them at a speed which seemed to outstrip the wind altogether.

“What—what’s that?” cried Amelia, who saw in an instant by the altered countenance of Stanley that he perceived something coming.

“Nothing—nothing but a carriage, my love. Don’t be alarmed. It is probably—” At this moment he saw an elderly person thrust his grey head out of the window, with the view of urging the postilions on. “Now, my lads,” continued Stanley, “*Look* alive!—send them forward!”

One of the post-boys turned and muttered something, which was meant to intimate that the pursuers would not be permitted to catch them.

“It is my father!” cried Amelia, “it is my father!”

“No, no, my love—no ! Don’t be alarmed. It is, in all probability, some other happy pair who are anxious to be married before us. But we must not allow them to beat us, you know. We are ahead now, the race must be ours.”

Amelia saw at a glance that he apprehended something more than that, but was silent.

Stanley now let down one of the front windows, and having mounted the seat, put his hands upon the box, in which position, being half out of the carriage, he could see both before and behind him. “Fly ! fly !” he cried to the post-boys. “Away !—Where are your spurs ?—we are pursued !”

The fellow who had the command of the wheelers looked round, and by a wink seemed anxious to make him understand that the old people on that road never were suffered to overtake the young ones.

Of this Stanley at that time was perfectly unconscious, although he subsequently found it to be a fact. The pursuers have indeed but little chance between Carlisle and Springfield. The post-boys—their own—know better than to allow them to overtake the fugitives ; for,

independently of the spirit of knight-errantry which actuates the chivalrous dogs, the principle of self-interest—seeing that they all share the profits with his Reverence—prompts them to keep at a most respectful distance in the rear. They will lash, and spur, and swear at their horses, if urged, with unexampled desperation,—flourishing their whips, and apparently digging away with their heels, and performing a variety of extraordinary equestrian antics, curbing, fretting, and fidgetting the animals, until their knees tremble again, and their nerves are so unsettled, that on a clear cold day there is no such thing as seeing through the steam which proceeds from their foaming bodies; but the lads hold it tightly to be a sharp point of honour not to suffer the pursuers to reach Springfield until the pursued have had time to get “*welded*.”

Had Stanley known this at the time, it is highly correct to suppose that he would not have been quite so much astonished. He saw them cutting, and slashing, and spurring, and manœuvring, and yet they lost ground!—which was very remarkable. Feeling, however,

that they should not even then be in time to get the ceremony comfortably over, Stanley cried,

“Twenty pounds for another mile an hour! —thirty for two!”

The post-boys no sooner heard this than to work they went, whip and heel. *They* were in earnest, and therefore dashed along in style.

Just, however, as they had got within two miles of Springfield, the near wheeler struck his unhappy foot against a stone and fell, sending his rider about twenty yards a-head. The man, however, knowing how to fall, was comparatively unhurt, and was on his legs again in an instant.

“All right!” cried Stanley. “Be quick, but cool. Up with the horse, and away!”

The horse, however, could not get up,—not that he was severely injured, but because he had got one of the traces beneath him, and two of his legs above the pole.

Stanley leaped from the carriage, with the view of assisting them to unhook the trace; and while they were thus engaged, the post-boys of the pursuers were exerting all their energies in order to keep back. They checked



and curbed their horses, while they appeared to lash and spur them with great severity, as they pulled them all over the road ; still, being compelled to go forward at *some* pace, every moment of course brought them nearer. They tried hard, very hard to upset the carriage, by pulling it over the hillocks which stood on the roadside ; but no—the carriage would not upset. Nothing could persuade it to do so—it would, in very spite of them, keep upon its wheels ! They were therefore compelled, though with manifest reluctance, to overtake the fugitives before they could make a fresh start.

Stanley now rushed to the door of the carriage, bade Amelia not to be alarmed whatever might occur ; and in an instant an elderly person, backed by another much younger approached him.

“ Villain ! ” cried the former, “ *have* I caught you at last ? ” And he ground his teeth furiously, and, shaking his fist in the face of Stanley, tried to force him from the door.

Stanley at the moment looked pale ; but he was cool, and stood firm as a rock.

“By whose authority,” said he, “do you pursue this most outrageous course?”

“Authority, scoundrel!” cried the hot old gentleman, foaming with rage to an extent which interfered with the distinctness of his articulation. “Stand aside!” And, seizing Stanley by the collar, he struck him several times with his cane, and his friend felt in a manner bound to follow his example, when Stanley, who could not approve of this proceeding, shook them both off at once.

“Stand back!” he cried firmly. “Use no violence, and I will use none. But who are you?”

“Insolent villain!” cried the elder assailant.

“Knock him down!” exclaimed the younger.

“*Touch* me,” cried Stanley, “at your peril!”

In an instant they both rushed upon him, and the next moment both were on the ground. The younger started up again, and Stanley again sent him down, where he remained a while to turn the matter over in his mind.

“Help! help!” shouted the elder. “My good fellows, help us! Secure him!”

“Stand off!” cried Stanley, as the post-boys

approached. "If you value your beauty, stand off!"

At this moment Stanley's men, who had just got the horse up, and made things all right for a start, rushed with much affected fury to the spot, and, without uttering a syllable, sprang at the other post-boys, who, however, seemed to understand them perfectly well, and the four fellows wrestled with great desperation, while Stanley was keeping the principals at bay.

"Get in!" cried the man who had been thrown, as he passed close to Stanley, while struggling with his opponent. "Get in, and we're off!"

The next moment Stanley sprang into the carriage, and keeping the two principals well from the door, his men at once threw their antagonists cleverly, and left them both lying in the road,—in a dreadful state of exhaustion, of course,—while they mounted their horses, and flew from the spot with a loud shout of triumph.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried Stanley. "Well done!—nobly done—Keep them up, and stop for nothing."

As they dashed away Stanley turned to look after his assailants. The post-boys were still on the ground, apparently writhing with the most intense species of agony. The torture they experienced appeared to be so singularly dreadful, in fact, that they had not risen when Stanley's carriage whirled out of sight.

Nor did they rise for some time after that. They had both been so dreadfully shaken!—Oh! the power to stand was out of the question altogether. Threats and bribes were alternately resorted to in vain. They roared with anguish, and rolled about the road in a state of torture; in short, it was not until their employers were about to vault into their saddles, with the view of pursuing the fugitives alone, that they felt themselves sufficiently recovered to mount, so horribly had they been shattered; and when they did mount, they rolled over the horses so ingeniously, and performed such a variety of astonishing evolutions, that their ability to keep on at all seemed to be an absolute miracle; albeit while they did, with undoubted ingenuity, their five miles an hour, they continued to shout, as a matter of course, “We’ll catch ’em now!—oh, we’ll catch ’em!”

By the time they had thus fairly started, Stanley was within five hundred yards of Springfield. Poor Amelia was half dead with fright. Had either of the pursuers been her father, the probability is that she would have rushed into his arms ; but, as it was, she shrank into a corner of the carriage. The voice of one of them she was unable to recognise distinctly, but that of the other she felt sure was the voice of one of her father's most intimate friends.

The carriage now stopped at the inn, when Stanley and Amelia instantly alighted, and went into the first room they reached. Fortunately his Reverence was at the time in the house, in a state which stands midway between pure sobriety and absolute intoxication, and being invariably on the *qui vive*, he on this occasion rushed into the room, without waiting for a summons.

“ I am raddy,” said he, as he drew forth a book.

“ That 's fortunate,” cried Stanley. “ No time must be lost.”

“ What fay ? What do you gi' ?” inquired his Reverence. “ These matters are always sattled beforehan’.”

“Do it quickly, and I’ll give you twenty pounds.”

“Wheugh!” cried his Reverence between a whistle and a hiss. “In a case o’ thees description I canna do ’t for less than forty.”

“Well forty, fellow, and begin.”

“Fallow!” echoed his Reverence, who held the term to be discourteous. “Maybe I’ll no do ’t at a’!”

“Proceed with the ceremony,” cried Stanley, “or we’ll go at once over to your rival.”

“Weel! weel! but fallow!” cried his Reverence, who did not by any means like it; but he, notwithstanding, opened the book, and muttered very indistinctly and very hastily certain very small portions of the regular service, and having called upon Stanley and Amelia to join hands, and then to sign the marriage record, the ceremony was at an end.

His Reverence then sat down to write out the “marriage lines,” of which the following is a copy:—

*“These are to certify to all whom it may concern, that Stanley Thorn and Amelia Henrietta Joliffe came before me, and declared themselves to be both single persons, and were lawfully*



*married according to the way of the Church of England, and agreeably to the laws of the Kirk of Scotland. Given under my hand at Springfield, near Gretna Green, this day, before these witnesses."*

Here followed the signatures of his Reverence, a waiter, a chambermaid, and the servant whom Stanley had brought from town.

On handing over the "lines," the priest received the fee for which he had stipulated, and then took his leave; Stanley gave the still trembling Amelia in charge of the females, and waited the arrival of his pursuers alone.

The postboys had timed the thing admirably. Nothing could have been more correct. The very moment Amelia left the room with her attendants the carriage drove up to the door.

Stanley at once darted to the window, and as he saw the post-boys wink at each other with peculiar significance, he for the first time distinctly understood the real character of the whole arrangement.

Of course the pursuers were not long before they alighted, nor when they had alighted were they long before they entered Stanley's room.



“ Oh ! you shall pay dearly for this !” cried the elder of the two, shaking his cane, and looking daggers at the fugitive. “ I ’ll make you smart for it, scoundrel !”

“ Who are you !” cried Stanley. “ I am not to be bullied ! Are you ashamed of your name ? I know nothing of you !”

“ Villain ! thief ! where is my daughter ?”

“ Your daughter ?” cried Stanley. “ *Your* daughter ? Oh ! I see ; a mistake. My wife is no daughter of yours.”

“ Liar !” exclaimed the fierce old gentleman, shaking his stick with additional violence. “ I am not to be trifled with. It *is* my child whom you have stolen—*my* child—my *only* child, villain ! and I ’ll have her !”

“ If for a moment you will be calm, I will convince you that she is not. I am not in the habit of allowing persons to address me in this way with impunity ; but I am disposed, under the circumstances, to make every allowance. Look at this—the certificate of our marriage. Stanley Thorn is my name, Amelia Joliffe was the name of my wife. Are you satisfied ?”

“ No : nor shall I be until I see her.”

“ I will consent even to that,” said Stanley, and he sent for Amelia.

“ And why, if what you state be correct,” said the old gentleman, “ why did you not explain on the road ?”

“ Because,” replied Stanley, “ you conducted yourself with so much violence.”

“ But, of course you knew that I was not the father of the lady ?”

“ I did ; but I did *not* know that you were not her father’s friend.”

Amelia now timidly entered the room, expecting, of course, to see some one who knew her.

“ Have courage, my girl,” said Stanley, taking her hand. “ These gentlemen are perfect strangers. I sent for you simply to convince them that they have made a mistake.”

“ I have to apologise, madam, said the old gentleman with due politeness, “ for having caused so much alarm. I am satisfied,” he continued, addressing Stanley, “ and I have also to apologise to you.”

The apology was accepted, and the strangers left the room, with the view of making inqui-

ries having reference to the arrival of the parties of whom they were really in pursuit.

“ Pray—pray leave this place,” said Amelia.  
“ Papa may yet arrive.”

“ And if he should,” replied Stanley, “ it will be useless. He cannot sever us, my girl. You are mine now!—mine from this happy hour. We will, however, return to Carlisle after dinner, if you do not feel too much fatigued?”

“ Oh, do. It is not far. I should not, indeed, like to remain here.”

It was thus settled. Dinner was ordered, and in a short time produced in rather an unexpected style; but they had scarcely been seated at the table ten minutes when a dirty post-chaise and pair stopped at the door.

Stanley rushed to the window in an instant, and Amelia, notwithstanding the turn-out was wretched, quickly followed, in the full expectation of seeing her father.

Before the postboy had time to dismount, the old gentleman by whom they had been pursued, opened the door of the dirty chaise, and without the slightest unnecessary ceremony,

dragged an exquisitely-dressed individual out by the heels in the most inelegant manner possible.

“Hollo!—hollo!—why, what—I say—my God!—well, *may* I—!” hastily exclaimed the individual in question, as he bumped from step to step, for he didn’t understand it. The thing was quite new to him. He hadn’t an idea of anything of the sort. Hence he became much confused; and before he had time to collect his faculties, a fair-haired girl—in appearance quite a child—sprang from the chaise, and rushed into the arms of the old gentleman, apparently but too happy in having escaped.

Stanley threw up the window with a view to the perfect enjoyment of the scene. He saw at a glance that the “gallant gay Lothario” was anything but a gentleman, and highly relished the supremely ridiculous style in which he rose from the mud to assert his dignity as a man.

“I claim her as my wife!” he cried fiercely. “You may be her father, or you may be any body else for what I care; I claim her unmiti-

gatedly and decidedly as my wife, and I am strongly justifiable, accordin' to the laws of Scotland. I reckonize her before all these gentlemen," he continued, pointing with remarkable energy to the postboys, whose countenances were at the moment particularly droll, "and accordin' to the laws of Scotland a reck-onition is sufficient."

"Take charge of her," said the old gentleman to his friend. "Leave this poor puppy to me."

The friend was about to lead her in, when the gallant with due dramatic action, threw his arms round her neck with the view of recovering possession; but his lady-love cried,

"Leave me alone. Get away, you mean creature! Don't touch me. I hate you!" When, as if this were not quite sufficient for flesh and blood to bear, her father clutched his richly-figured satin stock, and inflicted upon him a most exemplary chastisement before he relinquished his hold.

"Oh!" roared the gay Lothario, whose blood began to boil. "I command satisfaction—satisfaction!" and he threw his arms

about in a state of mind apparently tottering on the very verge of madness.

“ Satisfaction !” exclaimed the old gentleman, with an expression of contempt. “ You miserable, narrow-minded, poor, wretched fool ! You—*you* run away with my daughter !”

“ And, what ’s more, I still claim her as my wife. You ’re mistaken in your man. You ’ve got t he wrong pig by the year. I ’m not to be flummoxed. I ’ll not give her up. She ’s my wife—my lawful wife ; and I ’ll have her accordin’ to the law of Scotland.”

“ The law of Scotland, you pitiful scoundrel ! Attempt to follow me into the house, and I ’ll give you a caning so severe that you shall dream to-night of having dropped into a nest of scorpions. Put the horses in,” he continued, addressing the postboys, who enjoyed the scene much ; “ but before you do that I ’ll give you five pounds to cool that fellow’s head in a bucket of water.”

This offer had no sooner been made than the postboys rushed at the victim, and having turned him upside down with consummate dexterity, bore him triumphantly into the yard.



“ I have seen that person before,” said Amelia. “ If I am not much mistaken, he sold me the dress I have on.”

And this proved to be the fact. He was a silkmercer's shopman, who, having a sister officiating as housemaid at a school in the vicinity of Kensington, had, through her instrumentality obtained interviews with the object of his unalterable love, who was, of course, understood to be an immensely rich heiress, and who, having become enamoured of his slavish deportment, as well as of his chains, rings, and brooches, which were of the finest conceivable mosaic gold, had consented without much solicitation to elope. They had scarcely, however, got clear off, when the affair became known to the mistress of the establishment, and through her to the silly girl's father, who at once posted off to the north, and was enabled to reach Gretna first, by going through Pontefract, while they went through Manchester, and, by having during the whole distance four horses, while they had but two, as the mercer found that travelling was very expensive, and that the money he had borrowed for the occasion was getting rather low.



Nothing could exceed the indignation with which the gallant Lothario, when the cooling operation had been performed, ran dripping from the yard, with the postboys laughing and yelling behind him. He raved, and stamped, and looked so fiercely, and shook his fists, and threw himself into such a variety of picturesque attitudes, vowing the most heavy and inexhaustible vengeance, bawling through the window to "command an explanation," and asserting his rights according to the law of Scotland; in short, he was so dreadfully energetic, and worked himself up into such a frightful fever, that in a short time his hair became perfectly dry.

The postboys now brought round the carriage, and the persecutor-in-chief made his appearance again, with his child in one hand, and his stick in the other. Lothario placed himself before the carriage-door. He wished to argue the point calmly. He wished to show that the thing was "an out-and-out do." The old gentleman, however, pushed him aside with great violence, and having stepped into the carriage after his daughter and friend, left the

cruelly ill-used individual to reflect upon his fate.

This incident somewhat raised the spirits of Amelia, who, for the first time since their departure from Richmond, allowed a smile to play upon her lips, which were promptly rewarded. Of course Stanley was too good a tactician to speak then upon any other subject than that of the disappointed mercer. Upon this he accordingly dwelt, and in the most amusing strain, until the cloth was removed, when he ordered the carriage and four horses to be brought to the door as soon as possible.

“My love,” said Amelia, when this order had been given, “let us have but a pair. We *may* meet papa; and if we should, he will not then suppose it to be us.”

“Oh! we are sure, my dear, not to meet *him*; and, if we should——

“I would not see him for worlds! If I were to see him to-day I should die.”

“Well—well; as you please. The fellow shall *drive*, if you like; in which case the carriage will be supposed to be empty.”

“ Yes, let him, there ’s a dear!—let him drive.”

Very well. Orders were given to this effect; and when the pecuniary matters had been arranged to the entire satisfaction of all concerned, they started for Carlisle.

The spirits of Amelia were now far more buoyant; and although they returned much more slowly than they went, they appeared to travel infinitely quicker, and were hence within view of Carlisle before they thought of being more than half way.

Just as they were about, however, to enter the town, a carriage and four came dashing towards them at the rate of nearly twenty miles an hour.

“ That ’s papa!” cried Amelia. “ It ’s our carriage. Stanley—Stanley! what is to be done?”

“ Be calm, my love!” said Stanley,—“ be calm!” and he coolly, but with promptitude, drew up the blinds before the carriages met; and as they passed he saw through the little window at the back not only the Captain’s carriage, but the Captain himself, urging on the postilions.

“ Now, my Amelia,” said Stanley, “ we are safe.”

“ But he will follow us.”

“ No : they will take care of that. I have bribed them too well : besides, their interest will prompt them, if possible, to detain him.”

“ But that poor silly person ?” suggested Amelia.

“ He is not at all likely to come in contact with him.”

They now reached Carlisle ; and at the inn to which the horses belonged they put up for the night.

## CHAPTER IX.

AMELIA RECEIVES HER FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF  
MARRIED LIFE.

ON the following morning they left Carlisle, and having stopped a day at Doncaster, a day at Grantham, and a day at Stamford, they arrived by easy stages in town within the week, and proceeded at once to the house of the widow, where Stanley had decided on remaining until other arrangements could be made.

The widow, who had received a short letter from Stanley containing a vague intimation that on his return he *might* bring home his bride, could not, and would not pretend to understand it. He had not consulted *her* on the subject, and she most acutely felt that she was the first whom he *ought* to have consulted. She would not believe it; for Stanley himself, on leaving, had told her that he was going out

of town for a few days with a friend, which, when she came to reflect upon it calmly, was held to be perfectly conclusive. The very moment, however, Stanley returned and presented Amelia, her ideas on the subject expanded; and she wept—she knew not why,—yet she wept, and kissed Amelia, and congratulated her warmly, and hoped that she would be happy, and gave Stanley a good character, and declared that she highly admired his choice;—still she could not but feel very deeply that, as a mother, she had privileges, natural privileges, which ought not to have been violated, and that deep feeling caused her to weep and weep again. She nevertheless bustled about, and displayed the most earnest anxiety to make matters perfectly pleasant; and although at first Amelia would have been perhaps somewhat more at ease had the widow been somewhat less fussy, she soon understood her, and felt quite at home.

Amelia's first task, on becoming composed, was to write a deeply penitential letter to her father. In the performance of this task she wished Stanley to assist her; but as they could

not agree as to terms,—their views on that subject being diametrically opposed,—he gave the matter up altogether to her. She began it several times, and nearly finished it several times: it was, however, eventually completed and sent, and the Captain immediately returned it unopened.

At this Stanley neither felt nor expressed any surprise,—it was, in short, precisely what he had expected; but to Amelia it was indeed a most bitter disappointment. The roughest answer that could have been penned would have been endured with more fortitude. Having somewhat recovered from the depression it induced, Amelia wrote a long letter to her mother, couched in terms of the strongest affection, urging every conceivable excuse for the step she had taken, without, however, exciting the belief that she felt that it ought to be excused, and got the widow to direct it. She, of course, felt quite certain of having an answer to this, and therefore waited with the utmost impatience till the following morning, when indeed a somewhat heavy letter bearing the Richmond post-mark arrived. The superscription had been written by the Captain. She



kissed it, and then broke the seal with avidity. Its contents were the letter she had written to her mother, — which had been opened, the hand-writing of the widow not being known, — and the following note :—

“ MADAM,

Your husband is a villain ; and, as *you* have proved yourself unworthy of our affection, we disown you for ever.”

This was signed by both her father and her mother ; but the paper near the almost illegible signature of the latter, was blistered with tears. Amelia well knew from whose eyes they had fallen, and wept bitterly as she placed the cruel note in her bosom.

“ Amelia,” said Stanley, whose attention had been firmly fixed upon her, “ I do not insist upon seeing any note you may receive ; but in a matter of this description I think that you ought to conceal nothing from me.”

Amelia again burst into tears as she drew the note slowly from her bosom and said, “ You had better not see it, my love.”

“ Well, well, I will not. I understand ;— they speak harshly of me.” And he returned

the note unopened, but extorted a promise, which almost amounted to an oath, that she would never, without his special consent, write again.

Of course Stanley's former associates no sooner heard of his return, and the purpose for which he had been absent, than they crowded in to lavish upon him their warmest congratulations. For the first three weeks he gave a dinner almost every alternate day; and as his guests were nearly all unmarried men, they subsequently, at various hotels, gave him dinners in return. This necessarily took him much from home; for, although he loved Amelia, there was a charm in their society which he could not resist,—a joyous spirit which she could not inspire. She zealously strove on all occasions to convince him that she was indeed quite happy; she strove to talk as gaily, and to smile as sweetly, as before; but there was at her heart a silent sorrow which overshadowed all.

Having lived at the widow's about two months, he, at the suggestion of his friends, who were perpetually rallying him on the sub-

ject of a married man residing with his “ma,” engaged a house, which the widow magnificently furnished. When, however, this change was effected, he deserted Amelia more and more. He might even then have seen the force of that sound objection which her father had urged to their immediate union; for, as every scene of folly was new to him then, he was strongly, irresistibly seduced by its attractions; whereas had he been previously acquainted with those scenes, they would at least have lost the charm of novelty, if indeed they had not actually engendered disgust. He seemed only then to have commenced life. Three, four, and five o’clock in the morning were the hours at which he commonly returned; and when he did return, the effects of the wine he had drunk were almost invariably visible. Amelia, however, never reproached him with a word, nor even with a look of displeasure. Let him return at what hour he might, she would dry up her tears, and fly to meet him; and, having welcomed and affectionately kissed him, would endeavour to make him think that she still felt happy.

“ I am late,” he would sometimes say, “ very late, Amelia.”

“ Oh, do not say a single word about it. I care not how late it is, now that you are at home.”

“ You imagine, I fear, that I neglect you.”

“ Oh, no ! indeed, my Stanley, I do not. But,” she would add, as the tears trickled down her cheeks, “ I cannot but feel overjoyed when you return.”

It was not, however, always that he was able to speak thus rationally on his return ; still he avoided coming home in a state of actual intoxication, until one dreadful morning about four, when the rain had for hours been falling in torrents, while the thunder and lightning had been really terrific. On that occasion two of his most intimate associates accompanied him home, and left him the very moment they had seen him safely in ; but the door had no sooner been closed than he with infinite dexterity slipped down upon the mat, where he sat, firmly resolved to suffer no one to approach him but Bob, whom, by virtue of closing one

eye with great muscular energy, he was enabled to see indistinctly with the other.

Amelia rushed down in a state bordering on distraction, the awful conviction having flashed across her mind that he had been struck by the lightning.

“ My Stanley !” she exclaimed, “ you are injured—much injured—tell me—oh, speak !—are you not ?”

“ Go to bed—Meley—go—go to bed. I want something—something—to eat—something—some—eat.”

As Amelia’s worst fears were subdued, she thanked God ! She now saw the real state of the case, and, with the assistance of his favourite servant,—(for he would still suffer no one but Amelia and Bob to touch him,)—succeeded in getting him up stairs, when the cloth was immediately laid, and he was placed near the table.

“ Bob !—you old rascal—do you hear, sir ?—down upon your knees, and—pull—off—my—boots.”

Amelia at this moment was standing over him weeping, and as Bob was pulling off one







*Young Thorne after a Fatal Fall*



boot, Stanley, lifting his disengaged leg upon the table, stuck the heel of the other into a richly-ornamented raised pie, when leaning back in his chair, he rested his head upon the bosom of Amelia, and thus sank at once into a sleep so profound, that the process of undressing and lifting him into bed proved quite insufficient to rouse him.

In the morning, however, Amelia felt amply repaid by the fact of his asking her simply to forgive him.

“ I cannot forgive myself,” said he ; “ I am too much ashamed of my conduct ; but if you will forgive me, I will give you—I don’t know how many kisses.”

“ I will not forgive you for any number of kisses ; but I will, if you will promise that you will remain at home this evening, and that you will never be so naughty again.”

“ But why this evening, my love ? You know that Crofton gives his dinner to-day at the Tavistock. Of course I must be there ; but I will leave very early.”

“ You really will ?”

“ I will indeed.”

“Then on those terms, although you were a very naughty creature, I suppose I must forgive you.”

At the appointed hour Stanley joined his friends at the Tavistock, and according to his promise he did leave early—unusually early—but instead of returning to Amelia, he turned into Drury Lane Theatre, with the view of seeing a popular low comedian in “a new and entirely original” farce, translated from the French, and founded upon a real English comedy, originally adapted from the German. The house on the occasion was thin—a circumstance which at that particular period was by no means unusual, and he sat in a box in the dress circle, near the proscenium, alone. The farce, however, had scarcely commenced when a fine, handsome, gentlemanlike fellow entered the box, and sat beside him. He took no apparent notice of Stanley, nor did Stanley take more than a passing notice of him. He was elegantly dressed; and although the brilliant jewellery he displayed might of itself have tended to generate the idea of foppery, there was an intelligence in his eye, and a thoughtful

expression about his lips which not only at once banished that idea, but inspired the conviction of his being altogether a superior man. For some time he appeared to be exceedingly attentive to the performance, and occasionally patted one hand with the other slightly, and cried, with a patronising air, *sotto voce*, "Bravo! bravo!"

At length, addressing Stanley, he said, apparently on the impulse of the moment, "He is an excellent actor—is he not?"

"Very clever," said Stanley,—“very clever, indeed.”

"In my judgment we have at present no actor on the stage at all comparable with him in his line."

"There is not one," said Stanley, "whom *I* so much admire;" and he proceeded to enlarge upon his peculiar excellences without the least reserve.

From this fair point the stranger started other interesting topics, and with great ingenuity drew Stanley fully out by gently fanning his smouldering self-esteem, for as he prided himself, and with reason, upon the facility with

which he could read the real character of a man, it was not long before he discovered the weak points of his new friend, and when he had made the discovery he assailed them with a species of flattery so ingenious that Stanley became quite charmed with his conversation, which developed, indeed, much intelligence, with an apparently profound knowledge of the world.

“Who can he be?” thought Stanley. “He is evidently some one of importance. How can I ascertain who he is?”

The stranger, as if conscious of what had been passing in Stanley’s mind now for some time kept silent; but said as the curtain was about to fall, “Well, we may in our travels meet again.”

“Nothing,” said Stanley, “would give me greater pleasure.”

“Which way do you walk?”

“Westward,” replied Stanley.

“I shall be happy to accompany you as far as I go.”

Stanley bowed, and having taken the proffered arm, they left the theatre together.

“I generally drop in here,” said the stran-

ger, on reaching the entrance of an hotel under the piazza of Covent Garden. "They give you a magnificent glass of champagne, and there is nothing I more enjoy after sitting in a hot theatre. I shall pass, however, this evening—unless, indeed, *you* are disposed to join me?"

"Oh! I have no objection," returned Stanley, "not the slightest."

The stranger at once led the way; and, having reached the coffee-room above, ordered a bottle of iced champagne, and then began to relate a variety of anecdotes, which could not in any case have failed to impart pleasure. Another bottle was ordered. Stanley was charmed. He had never met so splendid a fellow before; in a word, he was so entertaining, so full of wit and spirit, that it was past three before Stanley thought it was one.

"Well," said the stranger, when they had finished the second bottle, "I am sorry to make a move; but I promised to look in at my club; where, by the by, I shall be happy to introduce *you*, if you are not in haste."

"I should like it much," said Stanley; "but not to-night. It is getting very late."

“ Well—well ! another time. Let me see. To-morrow I dine with Chesterfield ; but the next day. Have you any engagement for Friday ? ”

“ I am not at this moment aware that I have : I think not.”

“ Well, come and dine with me here, then, on Friday ? ”

“ I will. At what time ? ”

“ Why, say seven.”

This was agreed to, and the stranger wrote with a pencil. “ To meet at seven,” upon a card, on which was engraved, “ *Colonel Palmer,*” and presented it to Stanley.

He then drew out his purse, and Stanley produced his.

“ No—no,” said the Colonel ; “ this is mine. You shall pay for the next ; ” and, having settled the amount, they rose to quit the hotel.

“ By the way,” said the Colonel, as they descended the stairs, “ were you ever in one of the *salons* about here ? ”

“ No,” said Stanley. “ Are there many of them ? ”

“ There used to be several ; but I have not

been in one of them for years. *They* were the places for those who wished to see life! What say you? Shall we step into one for five minutes?"

"It is so very late," urged Stanley.

"So it must always be to see them to advantage. But, come; now we are here, five minutes can be of no importance. They are places which every man of the world *ought* to see. I pledge you my honour I'll not stop long."

Stanley could not resist. He thought, indeed, of his promise to Amelia; but held the fact of his having broken that promise already to be a sufficient excuse for going at once with the Colonel.

They had scarcely walked three hundred yards, when they stopped at a gaily-painted door, and, having knocked, were admitted by a peculiarly ill-looking fellow, who had previously withdrawn a slide, and examined them through a hole about six inches square, with a singularly scrutinizing aspect. They then ascended a flight of gaudy gingerbread stairs, and entered a room, in which about forty persons were as-



sembled, the majority of whom were females, dressed in a style the most attractive and superb. Several of these creatures ran up to the Colonel, with the apparent view of addressing him with the utmost familiarity, but a peculiar look from him at once repulsed them, which Stanley thought strange, although, instead of inducing the slightest suspicion, it tended to convince him still more of the superiority of the man.

“ Well,” said the Colonel, “ we must have a glass of negus, and then we’ll be off.”

The negus was ordered and produced, and they seated themselves to contemplate the gay scene before them; but the moment they had done so, a finely formed girl, who appeared to be very young, and was really very handsome, came and sat beside Stanley.

“ How can you be so selfish ?” she playfully observed. “ The idea of you two gentlemen drinking alone, when I am dying to wet my lips.”

“ Drink, my girl—drink !” said Stanley, passing the glass. “ It is not very good.”

The girl nearly finished the glass before she

ventured to pronounce her unbiassed opinion. She then declared that it tasted like mahogany and water, and suggested, in addition, that if she chose, the chances were that she could get a glass nearer the mark.

"Well, do so," said Stanley, as he placed half-a-crown in her hand; "let us see the extent of your influence."

"No, no," said the Colonel; "we had better be off. Come let us have no more. I feel stupid already."

"*You* need have no more, you know, Colonel," said the girl, who received a withering scowl for her pains.

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed Stanley, "you are recognised! Well, come, one more, and then."

The Colonel now suddenly and very unaccountably exhibited striking symptoms of intoxication. Stanley could not at all understand it. "My good fellow," said he, "why, how is this? You were very well just now."

"I have a very poor head," replied the Colonel,—*"a most unfortunate head. I can scarcely stand anything at all."*

The girl now returned with the “negus;” and having carefully put her lips to it, and said that it was different stuff altogether,—which was in reality a fact,—she gave it to Stanley, who drank of it with more than usual freedom, although it appeared to him to have a most remarkable flavour. Without, however, mentioning this, (for he did not pretend to understand much about it,) he handed the glass to the Colonel, who would not touch a drop, for his symptoms of inebriety continued to increase, and he pronounced himself to be “too far gone already.”

Stanley was now entertained by the female. She had a brief tale to tell of every person in the room, and succeeded in occupying his attention until his articulation became somewhat indistinct, which the Colonel no sooner perceived than he cried, “Come, finish your glass and let us be gone. I never felt so queer in my life.”

Stanley himself now began to feel somewhat confused; and, as he had an unnatural thirst at the moment, he at once emptied the glass; but he had no sooner done so

than the room seemed to whirl round and round with great velocity. He attempted to rise. The effort made him worse. He sank down again on the instant.

“Hollo!” cried the Colonel. “What, have you caught it too? Well, never mind, old boy! we can’t laugh at each other.”

From that moment Stanley became insensible.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE FIRST NIGHT OUT.

As Amelia had been led to expect Stanley at eleven, when the clock struck one she began to experience that species of painful anxiety, of which it is to be hoped men in general are ignorant, inasmuch as their ignorance of it alone can rescue them from the heavy charge of absolute cruelty. Stanley had never before forfeited his word. Whenever he had said distinctly, that he would be at home at such an hour, at that hour he had invariably returned. Still, could she have seen him then, she would have been quite content; for she chided her impatience, and conceived for him numerous excuses, and contended with herself that she ought not to expect him to run away at a moment's

notice, as if indeed he were her slave ; which, of course, was very amiable, and for the time being had a good effect.

Two o'clock came.—She rose and went to the piano, with the view of learning a new song ; but this was a task she was utterly unable to accomplish. Although her eyes followed the notes and the words with due precision, her thoughts were of Stanley, and him alone.

The clock struck three.—This is not quite kind, thought Amelia. But that thought was instantly checked ; she would not cherish the idea of his unkindness for a moment ; she conceived it to be unjust ; and hence, in order to banish it effectually, she opened a new and popular novel, which, however, failed to interest her. Still she kept her eyes fixed upon its pages, and tried to enter into its spirit, until the clock struck four, when she burst into tears. For the first time she felt that she was neglected, and that feeling was fraught with a terrible pang. And clearly, had she been able to ward it off much longer, she must have been either more or less than

mortal. No creature ever loved with more warmth and devotion, none could ever have been more gentle, more patient, more confiding; but let those who may be inclined to deem her suspicions of neglect either wholly unjustifiable or premature, compare her former position with that which she occupied then. But a few weeks before she was the centre of a circle of affectionate relatives and friends, the beloved of all by whom she was surrounded. All strove to anticipate her wishes, to contribute in every possible way to her happiness; and enjoying, as she did to the full extent their sweet society, she was happy, and buoyant, and gay. These friends, this society, this happiness, she had sacrificed for one in whom her heart of hearts had taught her to confide, but who neglected her, not, indeed, from any base desire to do so, but for want of resolution to avoid those temptations which he ought before their union to have taught himself to resist. She had now no society, no friends around her; she had given up all for him, and he was almost continually absent. Who,



then, can marvel that she experienced painful feelings? Oh! how much misery and vice would be averted if they who possess every blessing which parental affection can impart, with every comfort which affluence can collaterally yield, were deliberately to weigh present happiness against the prospect of realising that which is based upon hope!

“Surely,” exclaimed Amelia, “something dreadful must have happened. He must have met with some very sad accident; he must have been maimed or robbed by heartless ruffians—perhaps murdered!”

Something of a serious nature she felt sure had occurred, or he certainly would not have remained out so late. Yet what could she do? Should she send to the hotel? He surely could not, under the circumstances, be angry if she were to do so? She rang the bell at once, and, on being informed that Bob was in bed, desired William to get into the first cab he met, and to hasten to the Tavistock.

“Do not,” she added, “on any account send in. Simply inquire if your master is there, and come back to me as quickly as possible.”

The servant started, and Amelia paced the room in a state of anxiety the most intense; for since she had conceived the probability of his having been injured, that belief was each succeeding moment more and more confirmed. She opened the window, and went out on the balcony, and listened to every footstep and every vehicle that approached; but as this was a source of continual disappointment, she paced the room again, resolved to wait until the servant returned with all the patience she could summon.

At length a cab stopped at the door, when she rang the bell violently, and flew to the stairs. It was a single knock, and her heart sank within her. The door was opened, and William entered to convey the intelligence that the hotel was closed; that not a light was to be seen; and that he had rung the bell again and again without obtaining an answer.

What was to be done? A thousand new fears were conceived in an instant. She rang the bell for her maid; she could no longer bear to be alone; her mind was on the rack, and every fresh apprehension teemed with

others of a character more and more appalling.

“ Good Heavens ! Smith, what am I to do ? ” she exclaimed, as her maid entered. “ What is to be done ! ” And she again burst into tears, which for a time overwhelmed her.

“ My dear, dear lady, cheer up. Don’t distress yourself, pray don’t. He can’t be long now ; he is sure to return soon.”

“ Oh ! Smith, I fear not. I fear that some frightful accident has happened. Sit down and stay with me. If he don’t soon return I shall go mad ! ”

Smith did as she was desired ; but she had not been seated long before she began to nod and breathe very hard. Amelia started up to pace the room again, but Smith was unable to keep her eyes open even for an instant ; and as in a very short time her hard breathing amounted to a most unpleasant snore, her mistress dismissed her to bed.

The clock struck five, and Amelia was again quite alone. Her state of mind was now frightful. Every horrible accident that

could be conceived she imagined by turns had befallen Stanley. She again went to the window, and after looking out upon the darkness for some time, so excited and so nervous that the motion of a mouse would have alarmed her, she was about to return to the fire, when she was startled by the sound of a harsh cracked voice upon the stairs. Her blood chilled, and she became motionless; she listened, and trembled violently as she listened; it was some man singing! The tune changed, and the tones became nearer and more harsh, and she distinctly heard the words,

Oh, the roses is red, and the violets is blue,  
And the type of infection's the dove;  
But then neither doves, roses, nor wiolets won't do  
For to match with the gal wot I lo-o-o-ove,  
*For* to match with the gal wot I love.

Who was it? Whom on earth could it be? Some burglar, perhaps, whom drink had made reckless? She was about to dart from the window to the bell, with the view of summoning assistance; but as at the moment she

heard the handle of the door turn, she flew behind the curtain in a state of mind the most dreadful that can possibly be conceived. The door opened, and she heard some one enter and walk across the room. She was half dead with fright ; she did not dare to touch the curtain ; but as she at length summoned courage sufficient to look through an opening, she saw the back of a man without his coat standing thoughtfully before the fire. She felt as if she could have sunk into the earth. Her agitation was excessive. The next moment, however, the man turned his head, and she beheld—Bob in a fit of somnambulism, with a pair of Stanley's boots in his hand ! She had heard of his being a somnambulist, but had never before seen him in that character ; and, although her apprehensions having reference to the crime of burglary vanished, she would neither make her appearance, nor allow herself with any degree of freedom to breathe.

Bob stood before the fire for a considerable time, and when he felt himself thoroughly comfortable and warm, he began again to sing the refrain touching the character of the

girl whom he loved. He then placed the boots upon the rug, and his candle upon the table near the tray which had been set out for chocolate, and upon which were two peculiarly-shaped bottles, one containing maraschino, and the other curaçoa, of which Stanley after chocolate was especially fond. Bob looked at these bottles for a minute or two, as if some powerful inclination had been struggling with his conscience ; but it appeared that his conscience submitted to a defeat, for he poured out a glass of maraschino and drank it. He then looked steadily at the bottle beside it, and at length helped himself to a glass of curaçoa ; not indeed because he appeared to dislike the maraschino—by no means : it was manifest that his object was simply to taste both, that he might know which was fairly entitled to his preference. This point, however, he appeared to be even then unable to decide with any degree of satisfaction to himself. He rolled his tongue over and over, and nodded, and winked, and smacked his lips with due gusto in honour of each ; and as he evidently fancied that both were

particularly pleasant, he naturally felt that he should like to ascertain precisely how they relished together. Actuated by this highly laudable impulse, he poured out about half a glass of maraschino, and then filled it up to the brim with curaçoa, and having placed the two bottles exactly where he found them, he drank the delicious mixture, and, by smacking his lips louder than before, really appeared to approve of it highly. His attention was then directed to the appearance of the glass, which, by dint of zealous rubbing and breathing,—for he found the task exceedingly difficult of accomplishment, in consequence of the glutinous character of the liqueurs,—he eventually polished with the blue cotton kerchief he wore round his neck; when, having tied that little article on again with care, he re-established the glass upside down in the proper spot, took up his light, and walked from the room with all the deliberate dignity in his nature.

Amelia now quitted her place of concealment, and sank into a chair in a state of exhaustion. It was six o'clock. Her thoughts reverted to



Stanley, and as her mind came again quite fresh upon the subject, she conceived a variety of fresh fears. That which took the firmest hold was, that Stanley and her father had met the previous evening; that of course they had quarrelled; that a challenge had passed between them; and that they had both kept from home, with the view of meeting each other at day-break in the field. She knew the high resolute spirit of her father; she knew also the fiery disposition of Stanley, and felt that, under the existing circumstances, a duel would be the inevitable result of their meeting. She then dwelt upon the probability of either her father being killed by Stanley, or Stanley being killed by her father, with an effect so terrible, that she became almost frantic.

Seven, eight, nine o'clock came; still Stanley did not return. She rang again for the servants. She knew several of the friends with whom he had dined the previous evening, and to them she sent at once to ascertain what they knew about Stanley.

The answer in each case was, that he had left the party early in the evening alone, which

had the same effect upon her as if her worst fears had been absolutely realised. She was distracted ; she knew not what to do ; nor had she a single soul near her with whom to advise.

At length she sent for a coach, and, attended by one of the servants, proceeded to the house of the widow, whom she found just sitting down to breakfast, and who became so excessively alarmed on perceiving Amelia's agitation, that she almost fainted.

“ Good gracious !” she exclaimed, “ what on earth is the matter ? What has happened to Stanley ? My dear girl what is it ?”

“ I cannot tell what,” replied Amelia, in tears ; “ but I am sure that something dreadful has occurred. He has not been home all night !”

“ *Ho !*” exclaimed the widow, between a whisper and a groan, as if the announcement had really to some extent relieved her, when, kissing Amelia affectionately, she added, “ My child, we must hope for the best. Let us hope that he is at home even now. I'll go with you

at once. Depend upon it, my love, you will find him when you return."

They therefore immediately started, and on the way it was evident that the widow had something in her more experienced head, of which Amelia had happily no conception. She was not, however, without her apprehensions, although they were neither so lively nor so terrible as those of Amelia, until she was informed of the assumed probability of Stanley and Captain Joliffe having met, quarrelled, and fought, when her alarm became, if possible, more frightfully intense than even that of Amelia herself.

"Gracious!" she cried, raising her hands, and assuming an expression of horror. "And is your father bloodthirsty, my love?"

"Oh, dear me, no! quite the reverse!"

"But has he been accustomed to shooting, my dear?"

"He is a soldier," returned Amelia.

"I see it all! I see it all! My Stanley is no soldier; he never had, to my knowledge, a pistol in his hand. He is sacrificed!—cruelly sacrificed! My love, send to Richmond this

moment—send instantly, to ascertain whether Stanley has been heard of, and whether the Captain, your father, be at home. Send Robert; he will make the most haste.”

Bob was accordingly summoned, and desired to mount his swiftest horse immediately,—to gallop to Richmond to make the necessary inquiries,—and then to gallop back with all possible despatch.

“Fly! fly!” cried the widow; “stop for nothing! The very life of your master may depend upon your speed!”

Not another word was needed to put Bob upon his mettle. The very moment he heard that, he darted round to the stable, twisted a halter into the mouth of his best horse, and having mounted, dashed out of the yard as he was.

“Oh! these duels!—these duels!—these duels!” exclaimed the widow. “He is murdered, my love!—I am sure of it!”

“*Hush!*” cried Amelia, darting wildly to the window, as a coach at the moment drew up to the door. The widow followed. The coachman slowly descended from his box, and knock-

ed loudly. Amelia could not breathe, her anxiety was so intense: but when, on the door being opened, she saw Stanley alight, she clasped her hands fervently, and falling upon her knees, mentally offered up a thanksgiving.

Before she had risen Stanley rushed into the room, and, having caught her in his arms, kissed her ardently, while she, sobbing aloud, and clinging fondly to him, passed her hand over his pale, cold brow, as if to be sure that it was he who embraced her. Seeing her distress, and knowing what she must have suffered, for the first time since he was an infant Stanley shed tears. For some moments neither could speak. He held his hand to his mother, who was at the time giving vent to her feelings very loudly, and kissed her; and then sank upon the sofa, with Amelia still clinging to his neck.

“My love—my dearest love!” said Amelia, at length, faintly, “you look ill—very ill. I much fear even now that something dreadful has occurred.”

“No—no, my sweet girl; nothing—nothing of importance.”

“Tell me,” said Amelia anxiously, “that nothing serious has happened, and I shall feel as if in heaven !”

“Nothing serious *has* happened, I assure you upon my honour.”

“Are you sure—quite sure,” said the widow, “that you have not been engaged in a duel?”

“A duel!” cried Stanley. “How came you to think of a duel?”

“Oh, we have had a thousand thoughts!” said Amelia. “We have been tortured with a thousand apprehensions. But, my love, you are faint. Come, draw near the fire. You look very—very pale.”

“I will just step into my room for one moment, and then we will sit down together, that I may give you a full explanation.”

This, however, he had no intention of doing; nor could he have done so had he even felt disposed, for he had been in a state of insensibility from half-past three that morning until ten, when he found himself in a station-house, lying on a board before the fire, and surrounded by a number of policemen, from whom he ascertained that he was discovered in Covent Garden Market about five, fast asleep on a pile

of carrots, with his pockets turned completely inside out. He was also informed that as he looked very ill, the inspector, instead of placing him in a cell, had allowed him to lie near the fire, and that he would have to go at eleven before the magistrate, as a purely official matter, of course. On hearing this he rose, and sent at once for a friend, but felt particularly queer; and, on making his appearance at the appointed hour before the magistrate he was fined "five shillings for being drunk," and discharged. He had no knowledge whatever of the way in which he had been robbed. The value of his watch was about fifty guineas, and he had in his purse between twenty and thirty pounds. For his loss he cared but little; his chief object was to invent a specious tale to tell Amelia; and that object he had scarcely accomplished when he returned to the room.

"Well," said the widow, when they had been sitting for some time, "and what was it after all that caused your absence?"

"The thing is soon explained," replied Stanley,—“very soon. The fact is, I was coming home early, according to my promise; and, being foolish enough to walk, I was attacked



near the Haymarket by a mob of cowardly ruffians, by whom I was knocked down, robbed, and left insensible ; in which state I presume some kind creature found me, for on awaking I perceived that I had been carried to an hotel, and placed comfortably in bed."

"Heaven bless him !" cried Amelia. "I wish to goodness we knew him, that we might thank him as he deserves. But you are hurt," she continued, starting up with the view of examining his head. "I feel sure that you are hurt, you look so dreadfully pale."

"No, indeed I am not. They simply stunned me ; that was all : I feel nothing of it now."

"And what hotel did they take you to, dear?" inquired the widow, who did not by any means believe a single word of it. "What is the name of the hotel?"

"I think they call it Pequeen's. I am not quite sure, but I think it's Pequeen's. I was, however, so anxious to get home that I did not take any particular notice."

The incredulous widow deemed it prudent to press this matter no farther ; at which Stanley was by no means displeased. It was the very

first direct and deliberate falsehood he had ever told; and nothing could surpass the deep feeling of humiliation he at the moment experienced. It was a meanness at which his spirit revolted, and the blood rushed to his cheeks for very shame.

A servant now entered to announce the return of Bob, and Stanley, of course, inquired where he had been.

"We sent him to Richmond," said Amelia.  
"We feared——"

"To Richmond!" cried Stanley, with an expression of amazement—"to Richmond! Good Heavens! surely you don't mean to say that you sent him to inquire for me there!"

"I am sorry—truly sorry, if you are displeased; but really I knew not what to do. I was nearly distracted. But, indeed, it was the very last place. I sent first to inquire of every friend I could think of. I did, indeed!"

"Sent first to inquire of every friend! Then the thing is by this time all over the country! But, how *could* you think that they knew anything of me at Richmond?"

"I feared, my love, that you had met papa;

that you had quarrelled ; and that either he had challenged you, or you had challenged him."

" And the moment," said the widow in continuation,—“ the very moment I heard of the probability of such a thing, I suggested that Robert should be immediately despatched to ascertain if it really were so.”

“ I suspected that it was one of your brilliant thoughts, mother,” said Stanley with considerable bitterness.

“ Believe me,” said Amelia, “ we did everything for the best. You cannot conceive what a horrible state of mind we were in.”

“ Well, the thing is done,” said Stanley, “ and cannot be undone. Send Bob up,” he continued, addressing the servant. “ I would not have had it happen for five thousand pounds.”

Bob, who was already at the door, now appeared in a state of steaming perspiration. He panted, and blew out his cheeks to some considerable extent, and smoothed his hair, and looked as if he had not a dry thread about him.

“ Well !” said Stanley, “ whom did you see ?”

“ I saw the Captain and Mrs. Joliffe. They had me in, sir, and said they knew nothing at all about where you was.”

“ Did they say nothing more?” inquired Amelia.

“ No, ma’am,” replied Bob; “ nothing more; only the Captain said it was just what he expected, and then his lady set off crying fit to break——”

“ There, leave the room !” cried Stanley with some fierceness, which Bob, as he obeyed, thought strikingly ungrateful ; for he really had done the whole four-and-twenty miles in less than an hour and a half ; and he held it within himself to be questionable whether he should have done the entire distance in so short a space of time, had he known before what he knew then.

While Bob was engaged in the development of his feelings by rubbing himself dry with unparalleled severity, Stanley and Amelia were sitting in silence ; for, while the former felt galled at the idea of the affair having been published so extensively, the thoughts of the latter being at Richmond, induced as usual a fit of sadness.

Stanley's reverie was, however, soon at an end, for his friends came pouring in with the view of ascertaining if they could do him any service by backing him up.

While Stanley was engaged with the last of these gentlemen, Amelia herself had a visiter—one whom she did not by any means expect, and who was announced as a lady closely veiled, who had arrived in a hackney-coach, who had refused to send up either her name or her card, and who wished to speak immediately with “Mrs. Thorn” alone.

Amelia, who was still very nervous, looked upon these indications of mystery with alarm; and the widow, who had conceived a variety of ideas having reference to Stanley's indiscretion, contended that she was the more proper person to receive the mysterious stranger. Amelia of course readily yielded, and the widow at once bustled down, in the full expectation of seeing some creature with far more boldness than virtue. She was prepared for her, however, let her be whom she might, and hence bounced into the room, with an aspect indicative of dignity on the one hand, and inflexibility on the other.

The stranger rose, and bowed slightly, and then observed that she was anxious to see Mrs. Thorn.

“My name is Thorn,” said the widow.

The stranger again bowed, and then said,

“Mrs. Stanley Thorn is the lady I wish to see.”

“She is not quite well this morning,” observed the widow.

“I am aware of it,” said the stranger. “But probably you will do me the favour to state that I am a very old friend, and will not long detain her.”

The widow moved, and was on the point of saying something about whom she should have the honour to announce to Mrs. Stanley, and so on ; but the manner of the stranger was so ladylike and gentle that she bowed and retired, completely disarmed.

“She is rather an elderly person,” said the widow on her return to Amelia. “I cannot *exactly* make her out ; but at all events I think that you may see her with perfect safety.”

Amelia at this moment experienced a most extraordinary sensation. She could not account for it. It might have proceeded from the pain-

ful state of nervous excitement in which she had been kept during the night ; but she certainly never had so strange a feeling before. She however went down, although excessively agitated, and on entering the room saw her mother !

“ My dear—dear mamma !” she exclaimed, rushing into her arms. “ What joy to see you here !”

These were the only words that passed for some moments. Every feeling was merged in that of affection. Their hearts beat in unison—Nature was triumphant.

“ Heaven bless you, my child !—bless you !” sobbed the affectionate mother. “ My heart is too full to allow my feelings to be expressed.” And as she spoke the tears gushed from her eyes, while Amelia, who clung to her, kissed her with heartfelt emotion.

“ Oh, this is kind indeed !” said Amelia,—“ most kind. It is more than I could have expected,—much more than I deserve.” And, as at the moment she appeared to have been awakened to a sense of her position, she with downcast eyes dropped upon her knees.

“ I came not to reproach you, my love ; I



came not for the purpose of wounding your feelings, but simply to learn if you are treated kindly here?"

"Oh! yes—most kindly," replied Amelia. "My Stanley is most affectionate. He does all in his power to promote my happiness. Indeed he is a dear good creature. I cannot sufficiently love him."

"My child, conceal nothing from me. This morning you sent to our house. He had been out all night, and——"

"Yes—yes; he unfortunately met with an accident. He was knocked down by some heartless persons, who, having robbed him, left him insensible."

"Is he then seriously injured?"

"Thank Heaven!" cried Amelia, "he is not; although I am sure they have injured him more than he will admit; he is so anxious to conceal from me everything calculated to give me the slightest pain."

"Then in general he behaves with great kindness?"

"Oh, invariably!" replied Amelia. "There is nothing in his conduct of which I can com-

plain. There is nothing, in fact, which does not deserve the warmest praise."

"I am happy to hear it. My mind is now relieved. I much feared that it was otherwise, and therefore determined to steal away this morning, in order to ascertain from your own lips if it were so."

"But you will not leave me yet?"

"I must, my dear child. I must return as quickly as possible. No one has the slightest idea of my coming. It must, moreover, be kept a profound secret still."

"Mamma!" exclaimed Amelia, in a tone which could not fail to touch the heart. "Dear—dear mamma, kiss me, and forgive me! Pray—pray, mamma, forgive me!" and again she sank imploringly upon her knees, and sobbed bitterly.

"I do, my child, forgive you. From my heart, from my soul, I forgive you."

"Bless you!—bless you!—bless you!" cried Amelia, as she kissed the trembling hand of her mother passionately, and bathed it with her tears. "Then I may hope that you will endeavour to obtain for us the forgiveness of dear

papa ! Nothing but that is required now to perfect our happiness. You will ? Dear mamma ! let me beg of you—oh ! let me implore you——”

Amelia at this moment was so extremely energetic that her piercing voice reached the ears of Stanley, who darted at once into the room ; and, having raised her, bowed distantly to Mrs. Joliffe, and said, “Madam, Amelia is not now in a fit state to bear reproaches.”

“No—no Stanley, no !” exclaimed Amelia, “you mistake, my love. Mamma has been kind—very kind.”

“I beg pardon,” said Stanley. “I feel, of course, grateful for any kindness that may have been shown.”

Mrs. Joliffe offered her hand, which Stanley felt but too happy to take. “I have not time now,” she observed, “to say another syllable. Amelia will explain all. I must return with all possible speed. Adieu, my children ! Heaven bless you both !”

“But you’ll allow me to see you home ?” said Stanley.

“By no means.”

“ Well, part of the way ?”

“ Yes, do, mamma, do !” said Amelia.

“ Well, a very short distance. I return by the stage.”

She then took an affectionate farewell of Amelia, by whom she was accompanied to the door, and, when Stanley had handed her into the coach, he ran back for a moment, and said to Amelia, “ Do not wait dinner, my love ; I will, if possible, go all the way.”

Amelia was delighted : she looked upon a speedy reconciliation as certain ; and as the coach drove from the door, she turned to shed tears of joy.

## CHAPTER XI.

STANLEY'S INTRODUCTION TO A MODERN  
PANDEMONIUM.

ON reaching Piccadilly, Stanley begged so earnestly to be allowed to take the coach on at least as far as Kew that Mrs. Joliffe opposed it only as if she really wished he would. They therefore stopped at the White Horse Cellar, and having engaged a place in the next Richmond stage, rode forward, and soon began to converse with as much freedom as if nothing of importance had happened. He had always been a most especial favourite of Mrs. Joliffe; and during their journey his conversation so charmed her that she not only began to feel by no means astonished at what had occurred, but really held it to be a pity that they should continue to be separated, and thereby deprived of each other's society.

Stanley saw that he had made a deep impression, and therefore called all his eloquence into action with the view of making it "deeper and deeper still;" and in this he so admirably succeeded, that when the stage overtook them at Kew, she shook hands with him in the warmest and most affectionate manner possible, and left, fully resolved, without any solicitation on his part, to endeavour to effect an immediate reconciliation.

Stanley now directed his thoughts to Colonel Palmer, conceiving that to be the day for which the engagement had been made; and, although he had requested Amelia not to keep the dinner waiting, expressly in order that he might meet that gentleman, it will be here quite proper to state that it was an appointment which in any event he was firmly determined to keep. He was anxious to ascertain where the Colonel had left him that morning; in whose society; at what hour: indeed, there were several little particulars connected with his adventure upon which he thought his friend might be able to throw a light.

On reaching town he therefore directed the

coachman to drive to the hotel where he found the gallant Colonel, (who had totally forgotten his engagement with Lord Chesterfield,) reading the journals of the day.

Stanley approached him unperceived, and placed his hand upon his shoulder, when the Colonel started up, really as if he had at the moment given birth to the idea of its being some individual who knew him very well. This to Stanley was inexplicable, of course; but the Colonel soon felt himself better, and they shook hands with great cordiality.

"I scarcely expected," said Stanley, "to find you here thus early."

"I should not have been here so soon," returned the Colonel, "had I not been deceived by my fool of a watch."

"That is precisely the thing of which I am destitute," said Stanley. "*I have no watch to deceive me.*"

The Colonel, who appeared to be perfectly ignorant of the matter involved in this quiet intimation, waived that particular branch of the subject by saying, "Well how did you get home?"



"The very point I wish to come at," said Stanley. "I know exactly how I got home; but of all that occurred between half-past three o'clock and five I am utterly unconscious."

"*I* never saw such a fellow in my life!" cried the Colonel. "I have known in my time many high-toned dogs, but I never happened to meet with so perfect a devil."

"Why," said Stanley, who, in accordance with the lively anticipation of the Colonel, looked upon this as an extremely high compliment, "what did I do?"

"Do! You recollect leaving the place where they gave us the vile filthy stuff they call negus?"

"No, indeed I do not."

"You do not!" cried the Colonel, with an expression of surprise, which was really very clever in its way. "Do you mean to tell me that you do not remember our walking from the room with that woman you were so sweet upon?"

"Certainly. I recollect nothing of the sort. But what occurred after that?"

"Why, the moment we were out of the

place, you called a cab, which I thought very wise, of course expecting that you intended to go home at once ; but the cab no sooner drew up than you insisted upon the fellow getting inside with me. You would drive. You would have the girl with you on the box. You would see us both home ; for you were sure that we were much too far gone to escape mischief. Well, being at the time nearly as bad as yourself, I consented to get inside with the cabman ; but you and the girl were no sooner on the box than a policeman caught hold of the horse's head, and of course checked at once the development of your skill as a tooler. To the prompt interference of that man I attribute the present unbroken condition of my neck. I had, of course, very different ideas on the subject then, while you were so excessively indignant with the policeman that you threatened him with instant annihilation. You would fight him. You would bet fifty pounds to a shilling that you would polish him off in the space of three minutes. The man was, however, exceedingly good-natured : and, as I slipped half-a-sovereign into his hand, he

walked quietly away. I then again endeavoured to persuade you to go home. But, no. *Did* I think that you were drunk? *Could* I really entertain an idea so absurd? Why, of course I couldn't then, as you put it so pointedly: still I endeavoured to persuade you to go home. Well, you would; but you must first treat the cabman, and as the fellow promptly offered to point out a place, he led the way to one of the market-houses here in Covent-Garden. Well, on entering this den we found it crowded with a swarm of dirty vagabonds; you entered at once into the spirit of the scene, and appeared to be perfectly delighted. Your attention was, in the first place, directed to a knot of noisy nymphs, who although *rather passée*, looked blooming and fair, their cheeks being duly embellished with brick-dust, while the coarse pores of all the other parts of their faces were filled up ingeniously with chalk. Having treated these ladies with raw rum all round (which caused her whom you had brought to start off in high dudgeon,) you turned to a mob of emaciated beings, who appeared to be trembling upon

the brink of starvation. Their appearance was the only thing which seemed to give you no pleasure. They brightened up, however, the very moment you noticed them, and promptly asked what you were going to stand. ‘What will you have?’ said you.—‘A drain o’ gin,’ was the reply. In this they were unanimous. ‘Shall I order half a pint?’ inquired one.—‘Half a pint!’ you exclaimed. ‘Half a gallon!’—They all stared, of course; but half a gallon was ordered, and you paid for it instantan-ly. ‘Trotters! trotters! trotters!’ cried a fellow who had a lot of pigs’ pettitoes in a basket. You asked the women if they liked those particular things; and, as they held them to be delicious, you bought the whole stock, salt and all. Of course, they looked upon you as little less than a god; and when you called for a dance, they got up at once a legitimate three handed reel without music, as the man who kept the house placed his veto upon the whistling. This seemed to impart to them additional delight; but, as they kept on swallowing the gin with remarkable constancy and freedom, they soon began to drop off like

sheep that have been too long in a field of clover. On perceiving this you thought it high time to start yourself; and having given, with a bribe, certain secret instructions to the cabman, you led the way out of the house; but I had no sooner got into the cab, expecting, of course, that you would follow, than you closed the door with a bang, and away went the vehicle. I called upon the fellow to stop; but no: he had received his instructions: he *would* keep on! I therefore sank back quite resigned to my fate, and thus we parted."

Stanley was by no means displeased with the relation of this adventure: he on the contrary laughed very heartily at various points, as if, indeed, he had really done something to be proud of. "But, how very extraordinary," he observed, "that I should not have the slightest recollection of any one of the circumstances you have named!"

"It is wonderful. I have a poor head myself when I have been drinking; but I recollect everything that happened as perfectly as if I had drunk nothing but water."

Dinner was now placed upon the table, and

Stanley began to explain how he was found by the police upon the carrots ; how he was taken to the station-house without a shilling in his pocket ; how he was marched before the magistrate ; and how he was fined.

Of course the Colonel expressed himself utterly astonished ! Had he dreamt that such would have been the sequel, no cabman on earth should have driven him away. “ Why, where could you have got to ? ” he exclaimed. “ But the thing is soon accounted for. Now I come to think of it, there were two thievish, black-looking scoundrels at the bar with those women whom you treated. I have not the smallest doubt that they watched you from the house, and having plundered you, left you asleep as you state. But I really am very sorry. I am, indeed.”

“ Oh, it isn’t of much importance,” said Stanley. “ The loss of my watch is the only thing I care for. But, then, it is useless to dwell upon that now. It is gone, and there’s an end of it. But how I could have been such an idiot as to act as it appears I did, I cannot conceive.”

The Colonel smiled, and as he had already succeeded so well in describing the scene generally, he descended to particulars, and gave an infinite variety of amusing imitations of Stanley's tone and manner when in a state of excitement, which, of course, were assumed to be faithful. Upon these he dwelt at large during dinner; and, as he felt himself bound to be as facetious as possible, he did not fail afterwards to drag into their general conversation the various hits which had had the most palpable effect.

At length Stanley displayed symptoms of a desire to leave, being most sincerely anxious to be home very early; but the Colonel no sooner perceived this anxiety than he felt it incumbent upon him to subdue it.

"Well," said he promptly, without any apparent reference to what he had perceived, "I suppose that, like myself, you have no desire to be out late to-night. We will therefore just finish this bottle, and start."

"Upon my honour I must beg to be excused," said Stanley.

"Excused!" cried the Colonel. "My dear fellow, why?"



“ Having been out all last night, I wish to be home this evening early.”

“ Well, you will be home early. We shall both be home early. Look at your watch,” he added, smiling. “ You don’t mean to say that you want to turn into bed at nine !”

“ No ; but, upon my word, you must, under the circumstances, excuse me.”

“ Now that is unfair. You have made, since I saw you, another appointment.”

“ No, indeed I have not.”

“ Then how is it possible for me to excuse you? Nonsense! I must have your company this evening. Do you want to have sixteen or twenty hours’ sleep to make up for the loss of eight? Pooh! you’ll be in bed soon enough. I don’t intend to stop more than two hours myself. You can leave, of course, just when you please.”

Stanley had not explained to the Colonel that he was married; and, as he had no other sufficient cause to show why the engagement he had made should be broken, he consented to keep it with the full determination to leave at eleven precisely.

“ Of course,” said the Colonel, when he

found that he had firmly fixed his man, "you never play?"

"At chess? or billiards?" inquired Stanley.

"They are both noble games, but I alluded more particularly to hazard."

"I have not the slightest knowledge of the game," said Stanley. "I never saw it played. I have often wished to go into one of those houses; but I never could make up my mind to go alone."

"Oh! you need not go into a common pick-pocketing gambling-house to see the game of hazard. Almost every club in London has its play-room. The Imperial has one—the club to which I belong. If you like, as we are not going to stop, we'll go up to the room at once, and thus avoid the necessity for any formal introduction?"

"I should like it much better!" said Stanley. "I have for a long time been anxious to see the game played."

"It is a game which is known to every man of the world," returned the Colonel. "But come! *tempus fugit*."

The bill was therefore ordered and dis-

charged; and when the cab, which they had sent for was announced, they at once started.

Stanley, however, again thought of home. He felt that he ought to return to Amelia; but, of course, he could not do so then. Still he was resolved to leave early let what might occur, and conceiving himself to be perfectly secure in the assumed strength of that resolution he turned to dwell with pleasure upon the prospect before him.

The Colonel, on the way, seemed to be somewhat more thoughtful than usual: indeed, he scarcely opened his lips until the cab stopped at a very fair-sized house, a circumstance which seemed at once to rouse him from his reverie.

“Well, here we are,” said he, as the cabman knocked at the door, which was instantly opened by a peculiar-looking porter, who appeared to be very anxious to ascertain who they were. He seemed to be satisfied, however, the moment he saw the Colonel; and, having passed through three doors, they ascended the stairs, and were ushered into a room which was lighted up brilliantly.

In the middle of this room stood a table, round which several persons were sitting, while a man who stood with a rake in his hand presided over a cash-box, and several heaps of counters, which were marked "*ten pound*," "*five pound*," "*one pound*," "*half pound*," and so on. The business of this person was to rake the money and counters towards him, or to throw them to the players as occasion required, and to call "five to three," "six to four," "six to five," "five to four," or whatever the odds happened to be. Considerable sums of money changed hands every moment, and Stanley was astonished at the rapidity with which they played. His attention was, however, soon arrested by the Colonel, who introduced him to the proprietor of the "*Imperial*," whom he found to be an extremely vulgar fellow. "Yer do me proud, sir," said he, "for to wisit my 'stablishment. I ope to ave the honour off seein' yer ear offen. D' yer play, sir?"

"Upon my word I have no knowledge of the game," replied Stanley, who was rather amused with the fellow.

"It's werry heasy! There's nothink a tall

hin it. Set down, sir: I'll learn yer in no time."

Stanley accordingly sat at a side-table, when the preceptor produced a pair of dice from his flaming, salamander-coloured velvet waist-coat pocket; and, having put them into a box, said, "Look 'ear! s'pose yer call seven's the main,—there's five mains,—f'r instance, five, six, seven, hate, and nine, vich his the on'y chances: but, s'pose yer call seven's the main: werry well. Yer throw seven; vell, that's the nick vich in course vins the money. If yer throw eleven, that's the nick too, vich, in course vins the money likewise. But, s'pose yer throws five ven seven's the main,—f'rinstance, there's five, yer know, kater hace—vich is French,—then the hods is three to two, or six to four, yer know, vich his the same ticket ven, if you throws the five ag'in, yer know, afore yer throws the seven, yer vins both the hods and the stake."

"But, suppose," said Stanley, "I happen to throw two or three?"

"Vy, then in that case hit's the t'other, 'cos haces, as vell as duce haces, is crabs. But, to show as there's long hods ag'in yer

doin' that, if yer putt a pound down upon the haces afore yer throws, and throws haces, yer vin thirty pound; and, if yer putt a pound down on duce haces, yer then vins fifteen, 'cos there's on'y vun vay off throwing haces, vile there's two vays off throwin' duce haces, yer know."

"But, what do you call crabs?"

"Vy, crabs is on'y ven yer don't vin."

"And how many are there?"

"There's four crabs to the seven,—the sisses, the haces, hand the duce haces twice; five crabs to the hate—the haces, the duce haces twice, an' the sis an' sunk twice; an' six crabs to the nine—the sisses twice, the haces, the duce haces twice, hand the sis an' sunk twice; and, in course, the five his the same as the nine, an' the six his the same as the hate."

"Then these are the chances in favour of the table?"

"Percisely! There yer 'ave the 'ole thing hat vunce! I knowed vell *you* voodent be werry long a-learnin'. There's two or three more leetle pints vich 'll come to yer as nat'ral as clockverk vile playin'. *They* calls out the

hods, an' it's hall skvare 'ear, yer know !  
reg'lar hupright an' downstraight."

At this moment Stanley heard the rapid application of those opprobrious terms, "scoundrel !" "villain !" and "thief !" and, on looking round, beheld, to his utter amazement, a fine dashing fellow engaged in the process of wringing the nose of the Colonel. Of course he started up on the instant with the view of assisting his friend ; but before he was able to reach him, his vile, cringing, cowardly spirit was so conspicuous that Stanley stopped short, with a feeling of disgust.

"And vort's all this?" cried Stanley's preceptor. "Vort's 'e bin arter *now*?"

"Why do you allow this contemptible black-guard to be at the table?" demanded the Colonel's fierce assailant. "How can you expect men of character and respectability to come to the house, while you harbour so consummate a scoundrel?"

"That's hall wery poss'ble," returned the proprietor, pursing his lips, and looking through his shaggy brows. "But vort his 'e bin hat?"







“Securing!—and stealing my counters.”

“Vort! the hold dodge agin!”

“It is false!” cried the Colonel, with a look of indignation; but he had no sooner uttered the words than his accuser turned, and seizing him by the throat, shook him violently, until, in order to escape chastisement, he sank upon the floor.

“That jist sarves yer right! Now you and me cuts it. I told yer afore I woodn’t ’ave it. I guv yer fair vornin’. Vy carn’t yer do the thing a leetle matters like a genel’mán?”

The gallant Colonel made no reply. He felt himself reduced to the most minute insignificance. The circumstance of his having his nose thus pulled was sufficiently painful *per se*; but when to this was added the acute mortification with which the fact of Stanley happening to be present at the time teemed, it appeared to be just about as much as he could bear. Had the thing been done in the dark, or even before a select party of friends, to whom his character had previously been known, although he might most unquestionably have winced, he would have cared in reality

but little about it; but the idea of his importance being thus at once demolished, before the eyes of the very man whom he had conceived the most ingenious designs to plunder, really wounded his fine feelings so deeply, that he retired, with all the grace of a well-whipped spaniel, to the most remote corner of the room.

“Is it possible,” thought Stanley, as he stood very calmly before the fire, having declined the affectionate invitation of his preceptor to take a few practical lessons at the table—“is it possible that a man so highly educated and accomplished can be so depraved! The accusation surely must have been false—and yet, *could* any innocent or honourable man have either cringed beneath the infliction of a species of chastisement so degrading, or submitted thus to the snarling of that low vulgar dog? Do you know that man?” he inquired of the person by whom the Colonel had been assailed, and who now approached the fire.

“I know him to be one the most pitiful villains upon town.”

“Well,” said Stanley, “I cannot be asto-

nished at that, having seen what I have ; but I certainly was never so much deceived. He is in the army, is he not ? He styles himself colonel."

" Oh, a colonel is he now ? Last week he was a major, and he *has* been a lieutenant-general. But what may his name be at present ?"

" Palmer," replied Stanley.

" Ah, Palmer—Colonel Palmer—and a very good name. It was Dashwood a few days ago ; but when I first knew him it was Berkeley."

" But what has he been ?"

" Why, independently of his having been everything as a soldier, between an ensign and a general, he has been an extensive West India proprietor, heir to some extraordinary estates in Ireland, an owner of immense undiscoverable mines in the north, a Russian, Prussian, Dutch, and Spanish *chargé d'affaires*, and so on : but since he ran through the property he had left him while at Oxford, he has been what you see him now, a bonnet."

" A bonnet !" said Stanley. " What is that ?"

“ A picker up—a jackall—a fellow whose occupation is to seduce young men into houses of play to be plundered. He picked you up—I knew it the very moment you entered.”

“ But surely this is not a common gambling-house ?” said Stanley.

“ Why, what else do you conceive it to be ?”

“ I understood that it was a club.”

“ Oh, a club ! So it is—yes, they call it a club—the Imperial Club. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, nor do you know me ; but as I perceive that you have had but little experience in these matters, let me tell you that it *is* what you imagined it was not.”

“ Well, I thought that it was strange that a club, according to my acceptation of the term, should be kept by so vulgar a man.”

“ Oh, they are all low-bred scamps, from the richest to the poorest. The majority are of the vilest and most degraded caste ; and they engage as bonnets such men as our mutual friend the colonel, who are accomplished, prepossessing, and in many instances highly connected. I presume you know little of the game. I saw Sharp teaching you as



much as he wished you to know ; but allow me to give you a few private lessons."

" You are very polite," said Stanley. " I shall be happy to receive them."

" Well, then, in the first place, never play at all. Shun gaming as you would a pestilence ; for although a tyro almost invariably wins at first, it is sure to involve him eventually in ruin."

" A tyro, I suppose, is *permitted* to win, for the purpose of urging him on ?"

" Where they happen to be sure of him again. But it is an extraordinary fact that, in the absence of all trickery, men almost always win at first,—as if some evil spirit presided over the game, with the view of communicating the disease ; for a disease it is, and one which utter ruin cannot cure. I therefore advise you strongly not to play, if you wish to preserve any feeling of honour ; for be assured that, whatever he may profess, or however anxious he may be to disguise it from himself, no habitual gambler can be a really honourable man. His sole object is to win. If he can do so fairly, it is well ; but



if not, he very soon becomes unscrupulous as to the means by which that object is attained. Should you ever find the temptation to play irresistible, bear in mind the few points with which I am anxious to make you acquainted; for, without any desire to induce you to entertain a high opinion of me, I may state, that I am so far from being displeased with your appearance, that I would not have allowed you to be plundered if you had played."

"Now," thought Stanley, "let me narrowly watch this man. He may be quite as designing a knave as the colonel."

"In the first place," continued the stranger, "you cannot tell whether the dice they give you to throw are fair or false—there is scarcely one man in a thousand that can. They may be loaded, or incorrectly marked: you take them up as a matter of course, play with them and lose, when you attribute the fact solely to ill luck; and hence arises in a great degree that species of superstition, which forms one of the most prominent characteristics of a gamester. Now let me explain to you how

you will be able to ascertain whether dice are fair or false in a moment. Put the six and the ace together thus: then turn them until you also get the seven at the side either by the quatre trois, or the cinque deux—let us say the quatre trois. Very well; if the dice be fair, you will find the six sevens without shifting those dice; that is to say, you will find the six ace top and bottom, the quatre trois on either side, the cinq deux at the ends, and the same when you divide them; whereas if they be false, you will find, having placed the six ace at the top, trois deux at the sides, quatre and cinq at the ends,—in short, anything but the right number.”

“Then there are always six sevens on a pair of fair dice?”

“There are six real sevens; but as eleven is what is professionally yclept the ‘nick’ for the main of seven, there are in reality eight nicks to that main. But remember that, unless you find the numbers precisely as I have explained to you, the dice are falsely marked. They may, however, be marked correctly, and yet be false; they may be

loaded, and the only way in which the fact can be ascertained without cutting them up, is by trying to spin them. This requires some practice; but if a die will spin, it cannot be loaded; if it be loaded, it never will spin. Spin them, therefore, and make the six sevens, and then you may be sure that the dice are fair."

"I understand," said Stanley. "As far as the marking is concerned, the thing appears to be exceedingly simple."

"It is most simple when explained; but there is not one in a hundred at the present time who knows how to do it, although thousands of pounds would be saved every night by that little knowledge alone."

"But what was that trick of the colonel's which you exposed?"

"It is called 'securing,'—a species of legerdemain which some playmen accomplish with surprising dexterity. The trick is done thus: I am the caster, and have taken the odds. I wish to throw a certain number: very well. In taking up the dice, I secure one either between the fourth and fifth finger, or between

the fifth finger and the palm, and put the other into the box. I then throw, of course bringing them as near as possible to each other upon the table; and as I have taken care to have the deux, trois, or quatre of the one which I thus secured uppermost, the chances are turned in favour of my throwing the very number I happen to want."

"But can you not tell by the rattle that there is but one die in the box?"

"It can be told by an experienced ear; but such an ear only can detect it. I can tell in an instant; and whenever I discover a man resorting to the practice, I invariably expose him as I did your friend. By the way, where did you meet with that ingenious scoundrel?"

"At the theatre," replied Stanley.

"And he brought you out thus early?"

"Oh, this was last evening."

"And what place did he take you to then? Of course you didn't leave him without being seduced somewhere?"

"No; we went to an hotel and had supper, and thence to one of those saloons in the vicinity of Covent Garden."

“ And did he not in any way swindle you ?”

“ No. In fact, he insisted upon paying for the supper and champaign.”

“ Of course he'd do that. Then you managed to reach home without sustaining any loss ?”

“ No, indeed I did not. On the contrary, I lost my watch, and every pound I had in my pocket.”

“ Exactly. I thought that he would never suffer you to escape.”

“ But this was after we had separated.”

“ Doubtless ! Will you explain the particulars ?”

Stanley did so, and was astonished to see the stranger occasionally smile and toss his head, as if he could not have understood the thing better had he actually been there.

“ Will you be guided by me in this matter ? Will you take my advice ?” said he, when Stanley had concluded. “ I can see through it all : you were hocussed !—that negus was drugged ; and, however circumstantial his description of the scene at the bar of the market-house may have been, depend upon

it you never were there. The very moment you became insensible, he and the woman led you out, and having plundered you themselves, left you where you were found by the police. Now, as the only thing you care much about is your watch, and as, of course, you have no desire to make the circumstances public, take my advice : accuse this fellow at once of having robbed you ; threaten loudly to call in a policeman to take him to the station-house, and then to search his lodgings ; and the chances are in favour of your watch being restored."

" Good Heaven ! is it possible ! " cried Stanley. " But where is he ? "

" I saw him leave the room about five minutes since ; he is still in the house, I have no doubt. Come with me ; we shall find him. "

They at once left the room ; and having learned from the porter below that the colonel was in the kitchen, they proceeded there *sans cérémonie*, and discovered that gentleman, in company with others connected with the establishment, before a dish of boiled tripe, tastefully fringed with immense onions.

“Colonel Palmer,” said Stanley, “I wish to speak with you in private.”

The colonel blushed deeply as he rose from his tripe, and became somewhat nervous ; but he followed them, nevertheless, into one of the unoccupied rooms on the ground floor.

“I have reason to believe,” said Stanley, on reaching this room, “that I have discovered the scoundrel who robbed me last night.”

“Indeed!” cried the colonel, turning at the moment very pale. “I am very glad of it,” he added, although anything indicative of gladness in his countenance no soul could have perceived,—“very, very glad, indeed.”

“So am I,” cried Stanley ; “and I therefore now call upon *you* to return my watch, if you value your liberty.”

In an instant the colonel assumed a look of indignation ; his blood became hot, and his eyes flashed fire. “Sir !” said he fiercely, as his bosom swelled with wrath, “do you mean to insinuate—”

“Nothing !” cried Stanley, with corresponding fierceness, “I mean to insinuate nothing. I mean to charge you distinctly with having



robbed me; and, unless you restore that watch, I will instantly send for the police."

"Upon my honour I know nothing of it."

"Liar!" cried Stanley, "that base look betrays you. Have you got it about you? Is it here?"

"I will *not* be thus treated!" cried the colonel; but scarcely had he uttered the words when Stanley threw him upon his back, and drew a watch from his pocket. It was not the watch in question, nor had he any other; and as Stanley began to feel that he might have gone a little too far, he relinquished his hold.

"Vy, vort's o'clock now?" cried the stumpy proprietor, who entered the room at this moment. "Vort hin the name o' God and Mighty his it?"

"Will you send for a policeman? Last night this scoundrel robbed me of my watch, and I'm now resolved to make him give it up."

"Give it hup!—has a matter off course! Kam, none o' yer warment manœuvres—shell out!"

“ Upon my word I have not got it. I have not, indeed.”

“ No, I dares to say not ; ner yer don know vere it his ?”

“ For your own reputation, Sharp, make him restore it,” said Stanley’s friend. “ He is a servant of yours, and you are therefore to some extent involved.”

“ Do me the favour to go for a policeman,” said Stanley to his friend, “ or watch the villain narrowly while I run myself.”

“ Don’t, for God and Mighty’s sake, bring the polis hin ’ear ! They cusses the ’spectability of hevery ’stablishment they henters. I’ll bundle ’im hout neck and crop, and then yer cun give ’im hin charge. But *hare* yer a-goin’ for to give the ticker hup ?—Kam, that’s hall about it.”

“ I tell you again that I have not got the watch,” replied the colonel ; and he winked at the proprietor, conceiving that that might have a favourable effect. But in this he was mistaken ; for although Sharp was quite as great a villain as himself, the subject of his own reputation had been touched, and that induced him to be for once in his life honest.

“ Oh ho! I twig!” said he, the moment the wink had been given. “ But no, it von’t fit; no, nothink off the sort; I von’t ’ave it.”

This the colonel conceived to be extremely irregular, “ honour among thieves” having been for years the recognised motto of both. He, notwithstanding, drew him aside, and said something in a whisper, as he pulled from his pocket a dirty piece of card about an inch and a half square.

“ Now, serpose,” said Sharp, as he returned with this card in his hand, “ serpose this ’ear votch is guv hup, vill yer pledge yer verd yer’ll perceed no further?”

“ I will,” replied Stanley.

“ Vell, then, serpose ag’in that it’s pawned for ten pound, vood yer hin sich a case, yer know, be satisfied with the dubblikit?”

Stanley would have been, but his friend interposed. “ By no means,” said he, “ if that wretch has ten pounds in his pocket.”

“ ’Ave yer got ten pound?” inquired Sharp.

“ I have not,” replied the colonel.

“ He had more than twenty pounds’ worth of counters.”

"That's hall werry possible; but for them, yer know, he guv' in a cheque."

"Well, give me the duplicate," said Stanley.  
"This is correct, of course?"

"Oh, that's all reg'lar," replied Sharp.  
"You 'ave nothink to do but to show it."

"Now," said Stanley, addressing the colonel, "in future keep out of my path. You will never again let me catch you within the reach of my foot if you are wise."

"An' 'e may think hisself lucky," said the virtuous proprietor, as Stanley and his friend left the room; "there ain't many as vood 'ave let 'im off so heasy. At hall ewents, he don't darken my doors ag'in. I 'ope as this 'ear von't perwent yer from honourin' me vith another hurly wisit. Good night to yer, gen'elmen—I vish yer good night."

They now left the house, and Stanley was about to express his thanks warmly; but his friend, whom he subsequently found to be a member of the House of Commons, would not hear a word. "You will find me in the Albany," said he, "I shall be happy to see you. You must promise to call."

The promise was given, and they parted. It was then two o'clock. Stanley therefore at once proceeded home, where Amelia was happy in the conviction that he had been dining at Richmond, and had thereby effected a reconciliation.

## CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH STANLEY PERFORMS A GALLANT ACTION,  
AND THE WIDOW IS SMITTEN AGAIN.

ALTHOUGH Amelia felt for the moment disappointed, on hearing that Stanley had not been to Richmond, she soon became reconciled when he described the pleasure evinced by Mrs. Joliffe on their way to Kew Bridge ; while the fact of his having recovered his watch (which was really a miraculous fact, as he explained it,) formed, in her gentle judgment, a sufficient excuse for his return being so long delayed.

Stanley was not, however, satisfied with himself. He appreciated, perhaps more highly than ever, the amiable characteristics of Amelia, and upbraided himself with neglect. He began to doubt the strength of his own resolution ;

and often, while reflecting, would he press his lips together, and unconsciously frown, as he fixed upon a new course of action, indicative of anything but an insensibility to the value of self-esteem, the loss of which leaves a man nothing of value to lose but his life, and of that he then soon becomes reckless. He had frequently felt that he was not all a husband should be to a wife, so affectionate and gentle as Amelia; but on this particular occasion, so determined was he to reform, that—like a drunken individual, who makes up his mind to stick to tee-total principles for a week or a month, when the probability is that he will then break loose, and become worse than ever—he resolved to devote to her society exclusively three entire days! To this resolution he adhered; and Amelia was happy, and had recourse to every means at her command of rendering that happiness mutual; but before the first day was at an end, he began to view it as an act of penance. Amelia was all he could have wished her to be; her society was pleasing, indeed, very pleasing; but the pleasure was too monotonous; the thing became



irksome; the hours passed slowly, and hung heavily as they passed; still he would, with manly firmness, adhere to his resolution!—although it would perhaps have been as well if he had not.

On being released from this self-imposed punishment—for a punishment he unhappily held it to be—he proceeded to the Albany, to make his first call upon his friend, Sir William Wormwell, the person by whom the *soi-disant* Colonel had been so mercilessly exposed. He found him engaged in the pleasing occupation of perusing a number of letters from certain of his constituents, who were most sincerely anxious for him to procure for their sons and nephews appointments in the Treasury, the Customs, the Colonies, or, in fact—not being by any means particular—in any other place within the scope of his influence, which letters he invariably answered to the effect, that he was particularly sorry the application had not been made two days earlier; but that he would, notwithstanding that unfortunate circumstance, assuredly bear the thing in mind.

His reception of Stanley was of the most

cordial character. He appeared to be highly pleased to see him ; and, after a long and mutually interesting conversation, Stanley prevailed upon him to promise to have a quiet domestic dinner with him and Amelia at six, when remounting his favourite horse, Marmion, he rode towards the Park.

The day was fine, and, although it was yet early, there was rather an unusual number of equipages in the ring. Of these equipages there was one which especially attracted Stanley's attention. It was an elegant phaeton, drawn by a pair of extremely beautiful white ponies, upon one of which was mounted a chubby little fellow, who might have been seven years of age, although he was quite small enough to have been taken for four. In this phaeton were two rather brilliantly dressed persons, who appeared to be mother and daughter, both of whom took particular notice of Stanley as he passed them, which notice was repeated as often as they met.

This excited his curiosity. No arms appeared upon the panel, nor was there any crest upon the harness ; while the only livery of the

boy was a jacket with three rows of round gilt buttons, a cap with a gold tassel, top-boots, and an infinitesimally small pair of smalls. He had therefore no means of ascertaining who they were, although he felt anxious to do so. In fact his anxiety on the subject became very intense; for they met with unusual frequency, and each time their notice became more marked.

“Well,” thought Stanley, “this is singular. Who can they possibly be? I never saw them before to my knowledge, although I appear to be known to them. I wish they’d bow: I’d ride up and speak to them at once.”

Inspired with a very lively hope that they would give him this little opportunity of ascertaining who they were, he turned again; but scarcely had he done so, when a lady, whose horse had taken fright, dashed past, crying aloud, “Oh, save me!—save me!”

In an instant Stanley put spurs to Marmion. “Courage, courage!” he cried. “Be silent, and you are safe.”

The lady was then about twenty yards a-head; but, although the horse she rode was a fine,

swift, high-spirited creature, the beautiful Marmion, being put upon his mettle, flew over the ground in such gallant style, they were soon side by side.

“Hold firmly by the saddle,” cried Stanley, “and drop the reins.”

The lady did so, and he seized them in an instant, and tried to check the horse, but in vain; for as Marmion now made strong efforts to shoot a-head, he found it difficult to control even him. All he could do, therefore, was to keep them side by side in the middle of the road, and thus they dashed on until they turned round by Cumberland Gate.

At this point the lady's courage failed. “Oh!” she exclaimed, “I'm off!—my head whirls!—I can hold on no longer!—I can hold on no longer!”

“Trust to me then,” cried Stanley, who, just as she was on the point of fainting, caught her firmly by the waist, when, sending his foot home in the near stirrup, and checking Marmion's speed, he drew her off; but the pommel of the saddle caught her habit, and held it. He tried to rend the robe, but could not, the whole of his

strength being required to sustain his inanimate burthen, who was then in a more perilous position than before. Bob, however, fortunately came up at the moment, and having unhooked the garment, Stanley had the lady safely in his arms.

“Stop Marmion!” cried Stanley, who had not then the power to do it himself.

Bob spoke to him, and Marmion knowing the voice, at once slackened his pace, when Stanley was able to pull him up with ease. Bob then dismounted, and having received his master’s burthen, who was still quite insensible, and looked pale as death, bore her manfully in his arms to the lodge, where every exertion was made with a view to her recovery.

By this time the lady’s servant had providentially reached the spot, upon a mare that appeared to be about the same age as himself, which could not have been much less than sixty, and immediately afterwards a carriage drove up, containing two of the lady’s relatives, when Stanley, conceiving that he could render no farther assistance, satisfied himself that the patient was recovering, remounted his horse, and rode at once through the gate.

Bob, however, did not at all approve of his immediate departure. He held it to be altogether premature. It was a proceeding to which he gave no countenance, and which, indeed, he never would have sanctioned, his private opinion being, that if his master had remained until the lady had had time to look a little about her, something like a present would have passed between her friends, in the fulness of their gratitude, and himself. Nay, so deeply was he impressed with this conviction, that, as his master remounted, he intimated, as pointedly as possible, the expediency of being permitted to take upon himself the entire responsibility of catching the lady's horse, which would have answered his purpose perhaps equally well; but as even this privilege was denied him, notwithstanding he urged that it was six to four, at least, against the lady's groom catching that horse in a fortnight, he thought it so particularly unhandsome and unkind, that, as the natural sweetness of his disposition began to change, he pronounced it to himself, confidentially, to be enough to make a man's blood boil.



On reaching home, Stanley found his mother, whom Amelia had prevailed upon to dine there that day, and who was therefore about to dismiss her carriage. Her spirit was perturbed. She was fidgety and absent, and indeed appeared to have been altogether put out. She had passed Mr. Ripstone that morning; and Mr. Ripstone, by bowing with peculiar politeness, had awakened those beautiful feelings which, cradled in her heart, had been sleeping so soundly and so long. She would have stopped the carriage,—she would have sent the servant after Mr. Ripstone,—she would have taken his hand with the same cordiality as before; but serious considerations, having reference to the correctness of such a course, backed by an acute recollection of what had occurred, began to struggle with her inclination, and long before the contest was decided Mr. Ripstone was out of sight. Still she felt it very strongly; it interfered to some extent with the usual regularity of her pulse, while her nerves appeared to be—nay, really were—quite unsettled. But when she heard from Stanley that she would—ay, that very day—



dine with Sir William Wormwell, a Baronet, and a member of Parliament to boot!—regret was supplanted by hope, and her spirit became much more tranquil. She deemed it then singularly fortunate that she had not spoken to Mr. Ripstone; and as she proceeded home to dress,—for that was held to be, under the circumstances, absolutely indispensable,—she thought that Lady Wormwell was a remarkably euphonious name, and, moreover, one which could not be objected to even by the most fastidious. Lady Wormwell!—really it sounded very well, and would look very well on a card. Lady Wormwell—Mrs. Ripstone. No comparison could be rationally instituted between them;—the difference was very wide, and as to which name was entitled to the preference!—Well, she reached home, and having dressed irresistibly, returned to Stanley's house filled with high aspirations, and was soon introduced to Sir William. Why, what a charming person! Really his manners were very elegant! How excessively polite! And what beautiful eyes! Then his figure! It was not perhaps quite so symmetrical as that

of her Stanley ; but then it was an altogether different style of figure. And then his voice ! It was a fine, manly, musical voice, and he spoke so firmly, and with so much confidence, —and yet not unpleasantly so !—by no means ! On the contrary, it was precisely as a man ought to speak. She never could admire moustaches before !—oh ! she could not endure even the sight of them ; but then the moustaches of Sir William were such an improvement, that she marvelled they were not more generally worn. His conversation, too, was very entertaining ; while his style was extremely interesting and eloquent. In a word, her delight was unqualified until dinner was announced, when she could not resist slightly envying Amelia, he led her into the dining-room with such surpassing grace. And yet this was not as if it had been a matter of choice ! Had it been so, why, the case being different, might have engendered very different feelings. Nor was it as a matter of preference that he sat where he did. She, singularly enough, thought of this tranquillising circumstance, and the thought had a very good

effect ; for, after all, of what real importance was it ? He sat immediately opposite,—their eyes could, and did, meet constantly ; and although, in taking wine with Amelia, he looked at her probably a little too long, when he took wine with *her* his look was far more expressive—indeed, so much so, that she felt in some slight degree embarrassed at the moment, which Sir William perceived, and hence addressed his conversation during dinner, not exclusively, it is true, but chiefly to her ! There was then, of course, not the smallest doubt about the matter in her mind, nor was there the smallest doubt about the matter in the mind of Sir William, who continued to be as fascinating as possible until the ladies retired.

And then, with what rapture did she applaud his companionable qualities ! He had made a very favourable impression upon Amelia, she regarded him as an exceedingly gentlemanlike person ; but the widow was in ecstasies ; and, while he and Stanley were over their wine, she thought every minute an hour at least.

At length the reunion took place; and Stanley in due time proposed a quiet rubber, which seemed to impart pleasure to all; and, as the widow very pointedly intimated that she should like to have the self-same party at her own house on an early day, the day was fixed, and they passed the remainder of the evening, delighted alike with each other and themselves.

## CHAPTER XIII.

TREATS OF THE PARK, AND OF STANLEY'S MYSTERIOUS INTERVIEW WITH MADAME POUPETIER.

BUT one thing was now required to render the happiness of Amelia complete, and that was the formal forgiveness of her father. Poor Mrs. Joliffe laboured hard to effect this; but the Captain was not to be moved. He was sorry for Amelia; he was not—he could not be—angry with her: his anger was directed against Stanley alone; for, as far as her prospects of happiness were concerned, he would have been more content had she married a tradesman. He looked upon Stanley as a youth without any fixed principles,—one who had been thrown upon the world without any sufficient check upon his passions, but with the means at his command of giving perfectly full swing to them all; who had

to form casual friendships, which are at all times most dangerous; who had nothing on earth to seek but pleasure; and who, while fascinated by every novelty, had the power to indulge in every vice. He therefore felt that domestic happiness would be entirely out of the question; that, as love cannot live upon itself alone long, new scenes and temptations would wean him from home, if even they failed to drag him into the gulf of dishonour. The only thought which in the slightest degree shook his resolution to avoid a formal reconciliation was this, that he might, perhaps, be able to guide Stanley; to advise him what to embrace, and what to shun. But, when he reflected upon Stanley's headstrong disposition; when he considered that any opposition on his part might have the effect of stimulating, rather than that of checking him, he soon became convinced that the only wise course he could pursue was that of holding out until the time of danger had passed, conceiving that the additional claim which Amelia—in consequence of having sacrificed all else for him—then had upon his tenderness, would,

in the event of a reconciliation, no longer exist, while the vanity of Stanley might prompt him to act so as to enable him anon to exclaim with exultation, "Now what have you to say against me or my conduct? What becomes now of your baseless fears, your unworthy suspicions and guesses?" This consideration had great weight with the Captain; and, as nothing arose to outweigh it, he adhered to his resolution firmly, notwithstanding the pathetic appeals of Mrs. Joliffe, who advanced with great point that what was done could not be undone, with a variety of other arguments equally novel and strong.

Amelia, of course, had no knowledge of the Captain's real motive. She attributed the fact of his continuing to withhold the expression of his forgiveness to anger alone, yet hoped that reflection would cause him to relent. She would have gone at once, and thrown herself imploringly at his feet: but she could not without having Stanley's consent, which she perfectly well knew she could never obtain. This necessarily made her feel sad; and, as she appeared to be unusually depressed the



day after that on which Sir William dined with them, seeing that the few pleasant hours they had passed recalled to her recollection the very many happy evenings that were associated with the home of her childhood, Stanley felt pleased when the widow, who was in the highest possible spirits, called, according to promise, to take Amelia for a drive.

As soon as they had departed he ordered his horse, and proceeded at once to the Park. It was Sunday; and being, moreover, an excessively hot day, the appearance of the Ring was most animated and imposing.

Perhaps there is no scene in Europe that can be held to be comparable with that which the Ring in the Park presents on a fine sultry Sunday. In the Drive there are vehicles of every description, from the aristocratic curricule to the "vun oss shay." The countess, luxuriantly lounging in an almost horizontal position in her britska, is followed by the butcher in his "gintee drag" who (while "his missus, the vife off his buzzum," is injuring her spine by leaning over the back of the buggy,

with the laudable view of doing the thing with all the luxuriant grace of the countess,) is constantly looking with an expression of agony at the unexampled tightness of the bellyband, and continually making "a hobservation" to the effect that "she *vill* set a leettle matter forrard, if she doesn't petickler vont to be spilt." Then comes the rouged *roué*, with the rein hooked elegantly upon his jewelled finger, and with an eye-glass stuck with surpassing dexterity between his finely pencilled brow and his blooming cheek-bone, staring on the one hand into every carriage, and smiling at every milliner that passes on the other with a kind of fascination which he conceives to be irresistible. The dowager follows, with her three devoted daughters, whom she has put up at auction to be sold to the highest bidder, and who are engaged, as a mere matter of duty, in making eyes of the most provoking caste at those gudgeons whom their ma is most anxious for them to hook. Then comes an acknowledged leader of *ton*. Every eye is upon him. Whatever he may wear of an extraordinary character, whether of shape, make, or colour, is held

to be the mode, which is a source of hebdomadal mortification, inasmuch as when his aspiring civic imitators fancy that they have matched him to a hair, they find on the following Sunday that he is dressed in a style most astonishingly different. After him comes an old-fashioned phaeton, drawn by an old-fashioned horse, driven by an old-fashioned gentleman, with an old-fashioned lady behind him, guarded by an old-fashioned groom. The lady and gentleman when abroad never speak to each other by any chance. Neither has to communicate anything of which the other knows nothing: they know each other's sentiments so well that they are mutually impressed with the conviction that they need not trouble themselves to explain them. For a period of fifty years, probably, they have been man and wife, and their feelings, their prejudices, their hearts so mingle, that the death of one—come when it may, will be death to the other. Then follows the invalid, taking the air in a chariot, with all the windows up; thus inhaling the fetid atmosphere he has a thousand times exhaled, with a view to the expansion and more

healthy action of his tubercled lungs. A barrister follows, riding in state to extend his practice, and calculating—with correctness too, seeing that he must be an extremely eminent person to be enabled to live in such style,—upon his airings not only keeping his carriage, but putting into his pocket an additional thousand a year. And thus they go round and round, to see, and to be seen; flanked by equestrians from the duke to the draper, while the promenade is thronged with pedestrians of every grade; of whom the majority, however, are milliners and tailors, raising dense clouds of dust behind a row of individuals at the rails, who are engaged in usurping the functions of the Crown by conferring high honours upon persons unknown, and pitchforking people up to the peerage by wholesale. The heart of him who thus establishes himself as a fountain of honour must teem with a peculiar sort of secret satisfaction. It is highly irrational to suppose that, were it not so, he would take so deep an interest in the thing; for he is never by any chance at a loss for a title. A black-whiskered bootmaker appears: of course he is an illus-

trious duke. His Grace is followed by a bag-man : he is some celebrated marquis. A black-leg, who, in his early youth practised as a pick-pocket, follows him : he is some distinguished baronet, whose family originally came over with William the Norman in the reign of Queen Anne, when Richard the Third started over the Alps after Julius Cæsar. And this is pleasing to all concerned : it pleases him who imparts the information as well as him who receives it, while it meets the views of those upon whom the titles are conferred, and whose aim is to be taken for persons of distinction.

Stanley had not been long in the Park when he met the identical pony-phæton, which he had noticed so much the day before. The same ladies were in it, and the same lightning glances were exchanged. What could they mean? They might be friends of the lady whom he had rescued ! and yet, had they not glanced thus pointedly at him before that event took place ? They met again and again ; but, at length, having made a sign to Bob, they gave him a card to deliver to his master, and drove at once out of the Park.

Bob rode forward; but as Stanley was then at the door of his mother's carriage, and continued to ride by the side of it until they reached home, he very prudently deferred the delivery of the card until then, when he explained, of course, how, and from whom he had received it.

"Madame Poupetier!" said Stanley, as he looked at this card,—*"Madame Poupetier!"* It was a name of which he had never before heard. What could be the meaning of it? What could be the object of Madame Poupetier? He was engaged in conjecturing during the remainder of the day, and conceived ten thousand ideas on the subject. The thing was so unusual,—so mysterious! As a matter of courtesy, he must call upon Madame Poupetier; and as a matter of courtesy, well seasoned with curiosity, he did call the following morning.

Madame Poupetier was at home; and, from the manner of the servant it was clear that she expected him, for he was shown at once into a room which was ornamented with singular elegance and taste, and which he could not help

admiring while the servant went up with his card.

In due time the lady appeared; and, having taken Stanley by the hand, she gave him at once a most fascinating smile, and they sat on the sofa together. It was plain that she had been a most splendid woman; for, although she was at that period *passée*, traces of beauty still remained of a character unusually striking.

“ I feel honoured by this visit,” she observed, with a slight foreign accent, “ but indeed you must forgive me for having had recourse to the means by which it was procured.”

Stanley bowed, without replying; for the fact is, he did not exactly understand it even then; besides he felt at the time in some slight degree confused, which Madame Poupetier in an instant perceived, and therefore drew somewhat nearer, and took his hand again, and having pressed it, continued to hold it in hers.

“ This is rather warm !” thought Stanley, as she looked into his eyes as if she then felt quite happy. “ I suppose that I shall presently know what it means.”

Madame Poupetier at this moment of in-



terest drew nearer still, and then resumed, "The fact of my having sent my card to a gentleman to whom I never had the pleasure of being introduced, must, I am aware, appear strange; but when I explain that I was impelled to that course by a lady who is dying to impart to you something of importance, I feel sure that you will pardon me."

"I beg," said Stanley, "that you will not name it. I am happy, without reference to the means, in having become acquainted with Madame Poupetier."

Madame bowed and smiled, and pressed his hand again, and drew so closely to him then, that she absolutely fixed him in a corner.

"Have I the pleasure to know the lady of whom you speak?" inquired Stanley.

"I believe not," said Madame Poupetier.

"Have I never seen her?"

"It is the lady who was with me in my phaeton yesterday."

"Oh, indeed! and the day before?"

"Yes: she is a dear, good, affectionate girl; and I love her so much, that I consented to resort to the only means available of letting

you know that she had something to communicate."

"Indeed you are very polite. I shall be happy to receive any communication from that lady. But—pardon my curiosity—do you know at all the nature of that communication?"

"Why," said Madame Poupetier, who smiled, and shook her head playfully, "I *do* know; but Isabelle would scold me if I were to explain."

"Then I will not by any means urge you. When shall I have the pleasure of being introduced?"

"Isabelle is very anxious for it to be as soon as possible; but matters of this description are managed with more pleasure to both parties without the formality of a set conversation. I have therefore undertaken to solicit the favour of your company to-morrow evening, when, as I am going to have a little party, all can be explained without any reserve. Will you do me the favour to join us?"

"With pleasure," replied Stanley.

"There's a good creature. Poor little Isabelle!—she will be *so* happy! You will not be

late? Say ten o'clock—do not be later than ten."

"I will not," replied Stanley, who rose to take leave.

"Then you forgive me?" said Madame Poupetier, as she smiled and rang the bell. "You are sure, quite sure that you forgive me?"

"I am delighted," returned Stanley, "as well with this introduction to Madame Poupetier, as with her polite invitation."

"It will be a sort of fancy dress party," she observed; "but *you* need not come in any fancy costume. If, however, you wish to appear like the rest, I have one with which I am sure you will be pleased, although I think you cannot possibly assume a more attractive character than your own."

Stanley appreciated this flattering observation, and having acknowledged the receipt of the compliment inclosed, he gracefully took leave of Madame Poupetier, stepped into his cab, and drove off.

It was perhaps but natural that he should have deemed all this strange. The interview, instead of satisfying his curiosity, had had the

effect of exciting it still more. What could be the nature of this important communication? What could it mean? Surely no lady had become desperately enamoured of him? It was very mysterious! The warm manner of Madame Poupetier, her mode of pressing his hand, and sticking so closely to him on the sofa, with other little familiarities, with which he could not feel displeased, he attributed to the fact of her being a French woman, in whom they were understood to be common civilities. This he could—or, at all events, fancied he could—well understand, but nothing more; all the rest was a mystery, which had still to be solved.

## CHAPTER XIV.

EXPLAINS THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A PECULIAR  
FANCY DRESS BALL, AT WHICH STANLEY RE-  
CEIVES A HIGHLY INTERESTING COMMUNICATION.

AT the appointed hour the following evening, Stanley—having explained to Amelia that, as he was going to sup with a few friends, he should not perhaps return quite so early as usual—repaired to the residence of Madame Poupetier, who received him with characteristic grace, and expressed herself highly delighted.

“Mademoiselle Mignon,” said Madame Poupetier, after the first cordial greeting, “has not yet arrived; but I expect her every instant. You cannot conceive how enraptured she was when I told her that you would be here.”

Stanley now, of course, perceived that Mademoiselle Mignon was the little Isabelle, and

having observed that he should be equally delighted to see her, he was sent with an attendant to put on the dress she had prepared, and was then led by Madame Poupetier into a brilliantly illuminated ball room, in which there were from thirty to forty persons assembled, of whom the majority were females, dressed in various styles, with so much elegance and taste, that each style appeared to be absolutely the most attractive. He had never before seen so much beauty. It appeared to be impossible for the passion of envy to be excited there; for although some were habited as nuns, some as sylphs, and some as peasants, while others were in Persian, Greek, and Turkish costumes, they vied with each other in personal charms so successfully, that it would have been indeed extremely difficult to point out the loveliest in the room.

As Stanley entered, eight very young and graceful creatures, who appeared to have been under the tuition of some accomplished *maître de ballet*, were engaged in a picturesque dance, of which several gaily-attired elderly gentlemen appeared to be lost in admiration. At the

upper end of the room a quadrille band was stationed, and by the side of the temporary orchestra a group of old ladies, with remarkably round, red, anti-aristocratical faces, stood discussing with surpassing volubility divers matters, in which they seemed to take the deepest possible interest. But for this particular group, which was not fairy-like in the slightest degree, the whole scene would have appeared to be one of enchantment. This reduced it at once in Stanley's view to reality; and, as an elegant *brunette* at the moment took his arm *pro tem.* he began to notice the chief characteristics of the scene, a variety of which struck him as being most strange; but that which he held to be more extraordinary than all was the dearth, nay the almost total absence of young men. The ladies danced with each other, promenaded with each other, and chatted with each other exclusively, which Stanley conceived to be not quite correct; although it might have been reasonably inferred, from their vivacity, that nothing was really wanted to render their happiness complete.

He had scarcely, however, brought his mind



to bear upon the cause of this singular circumstance, when Madame Poupetier re-entered the room with an exceedingly delicate beautiful *blonde*, whom she introduced to Stanley as plain Isabelle. He had never before beheld a creature so fair. Her skin was as clear and fine as that of an infant, rendering more sparkling her brilliant blue eyes, which, notwithstanding the whiteness of her lashes and brows, were peculiarly expressive; while her flaxen hair, soft and fine as silk, hung in ringlets upon a bosom comparable only to animated wax.

There could be now no longer any doubt which was the loveliest girl in the room; for, although she was dressed in the most simple style, she, at least in Stanley's view, eclipsed them all; while—on recovering her self-possession, for she appeared somewhat tremulous when Stanley took her hand—she spoke in tones of surpassing sweetness.

There is probably nothing more really engaging than the simple conversation of one who has acquired a sufficient knowledge of our language to make herself just understood.

Like the innocent prattle of an infant, it fixes our attention, while we are interested and amused, and almost imperceptibly inspires us with feelings which are nearly allied to those of love.

Isabelle was born and educated in France. She had been at the period of her introduction to Stanley but twelve months in England, and knew just enough of the English language to make those with whom she conversed comprehend what she meant. Stanley was therefore charmed with her conversation and gazed upon her as she spoke as he would have gazed upon a child. Indeed he regarded her but as a child, assumed a patronising tone, smiled at everything she said, however seriously intended, and kept her hand playfully in his.

“You will dance with me, Isabelle?” said he.

“Oh! I vill be mos delight!”

“You are extremely fond of dancing, I presume?”

“Oh, yes! I vos lof it indeed veery great.”

“Well, then, we’ll dance the next set.”

And they did so; and nothing could surpass

the elegant ease of Isabelle, who glided through the figures like a fairy. Stanley now became more delighted with her than ever, and went through the following set, and then joined in a waltz, which he kept up with spirit, until his knees began to tremble, and he had lost the point of sight, when with great consideration he drew her arm in his, and inquired if she did not begin to feel fatigued.

“Fatigue!” she exclaimed, with surprise. “Oh non : I vill not feel fatigue till the day beefore to-morrow.”

Stanley believed what she meant to convey ; but as he felt fatigued himself, he confessed it, and led her to a seat, when she gaily explained to him that she had on one occasion danced “tree days effeery day, vid no daylight, no fatigue, no sleep,” and he warmly applauded her spirit.

“And now, Isabelle,” said he, taking advantage of a pause, “what is this highly important secret you are so anxious to communicate?”

“Oh,” said Isabelle, blushing deeply, and pretending to adjust Stanley’s dress, “I cannot possible tell to you now ; I am beesy.”

“But, my dear girl, you may as well tell me at once.”

“My dear girl!” echoed Isabelle, with an expression of pleasure.

“Upon my word I beg pardon,” said Stanley; “but really I am so accustomed—”

“Accustom!” interrupted Isabelle, as she turned her blue eyes full upon him—“Accustom!—Oh, yes!” she continued, as her features relaxed, “you have leetle sistare—dear girl—I comprehend.”

“Well, then,” said Stanley, “now, keep me no longer in suspense. What is it?”

“Noting a tall beefore souper! Indeed it vos not quite possible to tell to you beefore.”

Madame Poupetier now approached, and, after making a variety of observations touching matters in general, but more particularly with reference to the perfect understanding which appeared to exist between Stanley and Isabelle, she expressed a highly laudable hope that they were happy, and left them again to themselves.

“Have you known Madame Poupetier long?” inquired Stanley.

“No ; not long. I vos not been in Engeland long.”

“Your friends knew her, probably, before you arrived?”

“Oh no,” said Isabelle, with an aspect of sadness. “My friends nevere vos know Madame Poupetier.” And as she spoke the tears sprang into her eyes, which she tried, but in vain to conceal.

Stanley changed the subject in a moment ; but before Isabelle could reassume her wonted gaiety, supper was announced, to the entire satisfaction not only of the elderly gentlemen, but of the red-faced ladies, who hailed the announcement with manifest delight. They therefore at once slipped away, taking with them all who were not then engaged in the dance, save Stanley and Isabelle, who found pleasure in lingering until the conclusion of the quadrille, when they followed of course with the rest.

On entering the supper-room, Stanley found everything arranged in the most *recherché* style, and for the first time perceived that, while engaged with Isabelle, the number of gentlemen had greatly increased.

“Is that Monsieur Poupetier?” he inquired, alluding to a fine portly person who sat at the top of one of the tables.

Isabelle looked and smiled, and then replied,

“Non. Dere nevare vos be Monsieur Poupetier. Madame Poupetier vos nevare be marry.”

“Indeed!” said Stanley; “I was not aware of that.”

Isabelle looked and smiled again.

The champagne soon began to go round very briskly, and the guests felt, in consequence, much less restrained. They conversed with more spirit, and laughed with more freedom, and, indeed, there were several present who displayed no inconsiderable share of true wit. These, however, did not create the most laughter. The greatest amount of merriment was produced by two aged individuals, who had not a tooth between them, but who, nevertheless, exhibited the chief characteristics of buffoons to such perfection that Mirth burst the barrier of Pity to roar. Not, however, content with this pleasing result of the spirited display of his genius, one of them actually kissed two nuns who sat beside him; and Stanley con-

ceived, as they offered no resistance, but, on the contrary, felt rather flattered than not, that he was the father of those nuns, or their uncle, or their guardian at least, until Madame Poupetier, who saw the outrage committed, exclaimed, with appropriate solemnity, " My Lord !"

The expression of the noble individual's queer countenance on being thus solemnly called to order, became so excessively droll that it induced a simultaneous burst of laughter, which, being both loud and long-continued, threw his lordship into a state of perfect rapture, the powerful development of which he managed by rolling remarkably in their sockets his two odd eyes, with which, in point of legitimate obliquity, nothing at all comparable in the annals of eyes either ancient or modern exists upon record. The only person who did not laugh at this highly-interesting exhibition was the noble lord's rival. To him the effect was wormwood. He became extremely jealous. He held it to be a monstrous monopoly, and tried to break it down ; but, although he laboured hard to eclipse the noble lord, he eventually felt himself utterly extinguished.

It may here be remarked that champagne is



a wine of which ladies in general are fond : it were useless, perhaps, to dive to any depth into the cause ; but that they do love it dearly is a fact which experience has placed beyond the pale of dispute. Such being the case, then, it may, without any impropriety, be mentioned, that at this particular period of the evening that light and lively wine began to work its legitimate effects upon the elderly round-faced ladies by whom the festive board was adorned, and who entered at large into the general economy of the establishments over which they had respectively the honour to preside. This appeared to be deeply interesting to them, but not to Stanley : still his eyes might even then have been opened, had not Madame Poupetier with great adroitness suggested that the young ladies present were then at liberty to return to the ball-room, when, as this correct suggestion was acted upon generally, Stanley and Isabelle joined them at once.

“ Now, Isabelle,” said Stanley, having led her to a seat, “ what is this grand secret ? ”

Isabelle gazed at him intently for a moment, and then said, “ *Est-ce encore un secret ?* ”

“Oui vraiment,” replied Stanley; “mais parlez Anglais. Il m’est difficile—il m’est difficile—de vous faire comprendre en Français; en même temps j’admire beaucoup plus—beaucoup plus—j’admire beaucoup plus votre Anglais que votre Français,”

“Vich vos be de same to me myself, but different. Still I sall try to pleasure you.”

“Well, then,” said Stanley. “Now what is it?”

“Vy,” said Isabelle, as she played with Stanley’s chain, and arranged it in various devices upon his vest, “it is—I—it is veery terrible to me to tell to you. I cannot possible.”

“Why, you silly girl?”

“Vell, your sall—you sall deviner—vot you call?—guess—yes, yes; you sall guess.”

“Impossible! I cannot.”

“Cannot guess? Vot vill I do? You vill not be angry? Please do not be angry?”

“Angry, my dear girl! Why should I be angry? I cannot be angry with you!”

Isabelle raised her eyes, which then sparkled with pleasure; but dropped them again as she

said, "Oh, it is veery shocking for me ! but it vill as vell bee done at last as at fust !" when taking a deep inspiration, she added, "I lof you !" and buried her face in his bosom.

"And this is the secret," thought Stanley. "Well ! I suspected as much. Now how am I to act ? I must not be serious with this poor girl. I must pass it off with levity,—treat it as a jest. Isabelle," said he playfully, "let me see your eyes."

Conceiving that his object was to test her sincerity, she looked at him firmly in an instant.

"And so you really love me ?"

"Oh, yes, indeed ! I have veery dear great lof for you in my heart."

"Upon my honour I feel highly flattered."

"Oh, no : tere is no flatterie in vérité. Indeed I vos not a tall flatter."

"And, pray how long have I had the honour of your love ?"

"Evare, from ven I deed know you to see."

"Indeed ! Well, that *is* strange. But Isabelle, what is the character of your love ?"

"Te character ? I cannot tell. I nevare

deed lof like tis lof beefore. Oh ! it is happiness—yet it is not : it gives to me pleasure, and yet it does not : it is te supreme—it is—oh !—it is lof !”

“ Now, suppose, Isabelle, that I were married.”

“ Marry ! oh, no, no, no ! you are not marry.”

“ But, if I were ?”

“ Vy, if you vere marry, it vill be veery terrible to me.”

“ Of course in such a case you would love me no more ?”

“ No more ! Till evare and evare ! I vill not help it. But, no, no, you are not marry a tall. I perceive by you smile you are not, vich is veery great felicity to me.”

“ Well, come,” said Stanley, attempting to rise, “ shall we dance the next set ?”

“ Yes—yes,” said Isabelle ; “ but—you have quite forget to tell to me someting.”

“ Indeed ! What have I forgotten ?”

“ You have quite entirely forget to say you lof me.”

“ Well, that is indeed very wrong, is it not ?”

“ But,” said Isabelle after a pause, “ you have nevare tell to me still !—You do *not* lof me.”

“ Love you ? How can I resist ? I can’t but love so sweet a girl.”

“ But, do you lof me vid de veritable lof vich is lof—vich is true ? Ah ! vy you hesitate ? vy you not answer to me ? You are—*marry* ! Oh, tell to me if it is so ! but do not—oh, do not be cruel to say it is if it is not. Are you marry ?”

“ I will not deceive you,” said Stanley : “ I am.”

Isabelle dropped her head, and was silent. The tears flowed fast though unheeded by her, and she looked as if the answer of Stanley had been death to every hope she had cherished.

“ Come, come,” said he, “ why are you so sad ? Because I happen to be married ? Why, I hope to see you married soon.”

“ Oh, nevare ! You vill nevare see Isabelle marry : you vill nevare see Isabelle more !”

“ Hark ! what is that ?” exclaimed Stanley, as at the moment he heard a loud scream, followed by cries which had a thrilling effect.

“Remain here, my girl. Do not be alarmed. I will return to you immediately.”

Isabelle pressed his hand, and he darted from the room.

Following the sound of the voices, which now became more and more loud, he soon entered the room in which supper had been laid, and which at that time presented a scene of a character the most lively and imposing. The tables were turned upside down; the chairs were broken; the pier-glass was starred; and the carpet was strewn with the fragments of bottles, and saturated with wine; and while those of the guests by whom the sport was enjoyed were pulling others back, and shouting “Let them alone!” the noble individual who had produced so much mirth, and his rival, whom at supper he had totally eclipsed, were mounted upon a sideboard, engaged among the glasses in the performance of a musical *pas de deux*.

Stanley at first could not get even a glance at the principal characters engaged in the scene; but having, by dint of great perseverance, broken through a kind of ring, he per-

ceived two of the red-faced ladies devoting all their physical energies, with the view of getting as much satisfaction out of each other as possible, to the manifest delight of those by whom they were respectively backed. One of these ladies struck out like a man quite straight from the shoulder and fairly; but the other, though incomparably less scientific, did with her talons the greatest amount of execution. They were both in a state in which ladies ought never to wish to be, whether they do or do not love their lords; and being so, the highest object of each was to damage the countenance of the other as much as she comfortably could.

“Pray—pray, put an end to it,—pray!” exclaimed Madame Poupetier, with an expression of agony. “Oh, the reputation of my house! —the reputation of my house!”

Stanley, on being thus appealed to, at once interfered, but in vain.

“I’ll teach her to run down my girls!” shrieked the more scientific of the two, who at the moment aimed a left-handed blow at her opponent, whose cap, though adorned with



pinks, lilies, and roses, and long ears of corn, was so frightened that it flew off her head. "I'll show her the difference! I keep them like ladies, and that's more than some people do," and she aimed another blow, which had so powerful an effect upon the face of her opponent, that that lady considered it expedient to close; when, apparently with malice aforethought, she plucked off in an instant her more scientific antagonist's *coiffure*, consisting not only of a violet velvet turban, with three birds of paradise stuck up in front, but of an elegant richly-curled, highly-wrought peruke! Oh! to the delicate and strictly-private feelings of that lady this was terrible indeed,—and it may not be altogether incorrect to mention, that with her white bald head, and her round red face, thus completely unadorned, she did not look so comfortable quite as she did before. Still, although she felt it deeply, while the other shrieked with laudable exultation, she flew at her boldly again, and caught hold of *her* hair, expecting evidently a similar result, which would have made her comparatively happy; but, albeit she tugged and tugged with becom-

ing perseverance, she found it so excessively natural that she really began to deem herself conquered, inasmuch as she felt that she could not inflict upon the feelings of her opponent so deep a wound as that which her opponent had inflicted upon hers : so natural a fact is it that, while she cared but little about an exposure of her moral deformities, over which she had control, she could not bear the exposure of those physical defects, over which she had no control whatever ; and hence, notwithstanding the enthusiastic promptings of her satellites, who really gave her every encouragement to “go in and win,” she snatched from the ground her degraded *coiffure*, and rushed from the room, amid loud roars of laughter.

Stanley now began to feel convinced that some of the persons there assembled were not of the most respectable caste ; but, without at all dwelling upon the importance which ought to have been attached to this conviction, he returned to the ball-room, with the view of rejoining Isabelle. He reached the couch on which he had left her : she had vanished. He inquired of those around : they knew nothing

of her departure. He requested the servants to search the house, and they did search; they searched every room: she was not to be found. He remembered the last words she had uttered, and became apprehensive of her having madly rushed to self-destruction. He wished that he had not been so candid, yet felt that he could not be blamed. He inquired of Madame Poupetier; he inquired of all whom he met; he could not obtain the slightest information. He felt that during the disgraceful confusion she must have escaped unperceived, and, being firmly convinced that she was lost, he changed his dress, and left the house, with her last words ringing in his ears, "You will never see Isabelle married: you will never see Isabelle more!"

## CHAPTER XV.

STANLEY DREAMS OF ISABELLE, WITH WHOSE  
NAME AMELIA THEREBY BECOMES ACQUAINTED

STANLEY had no sooner left the house than it struck him that he was bound by every charitable feeling to proceed without delay to the residence of Isabelle. And yet, where did she reside? How could he ascertain? He might perhaps from Madame Poupetier; but how extremely incorrect it would appear if he applied to her then. And if even he did apply, and the application were successful, he could not, with any appearance of propriety, call at that hour upon Isabelle; and if he did call, and found that she had reached home in safety, he of course would be unable to see her to dissuade her from any desperate act she

might contemplate. And if again he found that she had not returned, what could he do then? Puzzled by the various promptings of prudence on the one hand, and inclination on the other, he walked to and fro in a state of irresolution, until a cab drew towards him, when he entered it mechanically, and at once proceeded home.

Amelia, who would never retire until he returned, had for hours been waiting most anxiously for him. She had been in tears. She had endeavoured to believe that it was wrong to be sad, and that her grief had its origin in selfishness; still she could not help grieving; the tears would continue to flow. The very moment, however, he returned she hastened to remove everything indicative of sadness, and looked cheerful and happy, and smiled with her wonted sweetness. Nor was this hypocrisy. If even it had been, it might perhaps be held to have been venial; but it was not. She did feel happy on his return; her smile of gladness was sincere; and when she flew at once to meet and to embrace him, she but obeyed the impulse of her heart.

“Have you passed a pleasant evening, my love?” she inquired.

“Yes—yes,” replied Stanley; “very pleasant—considering that my Amelia was not with me.”

“You wish me to believe that you do not flatter?” said Amelia, with a playful expression. “Well, well, I do believe it. Oh yes; if I did not, I should doubt your sincerity. But why are you not cheerful? I am with you now!”

“I only feel fatigued,” replied Stanley, passing his hand languidly over his eyes.

“You must be, I am sure. You shall have some refreshment, and then for a long sweet sleep.”

Stanley looked at Amelia, and drew a comparison between her appearance and that of Isabelle, of which the result was unhappily in favour of the latter. Isabelle was more strikingly beautiful than Amelia. It would indeed have been impossible for her to have been more gentle, more elegant, or more amiable; but her features were more regular, she possessed more beauty, which has in all cases an undue influence when the comparison is merely super-

ficial. This result, however, failed to make a deep impression then. The endearing fondness of Amelia, which was ever most conspicuous when his spirits were most depressed, caused him to feel that he in reality possessed a jewel which could not be too highly valued. He became therefore speedily reconciled; and, after reproaching himself for having entertained for an instant a wish that he had not been married, he returned those endearments which had been lavished upon him by Amelia, and thus rendered her perfectly happy.

On retiring to rest, the effect of the excitement of the scene he had just quitted was that of inducing immediate sleep; but the circumstances connected with what he considered the chief feature of that scene effectually prevented his sleep being calm. He was haunted by Isabelle. In imagination he saw her before him; now with a phial to her lips, then with a dagger at her heart, and anon upon the brink of a precipice, from which he tried to snatch her in vain. He seemed fixed to the earth—he could not stir. He called to her—she heeded him not. There she stood, looking



more lovely than ever, in a position of imminent peril, while he had not the power to move a single step with the view of saving her from destruction. Again he called: she heard him, but shrieked, and disappeared. He felt himself fixed to the earth still; but presently a white mist arose from the gulf into which she had fallen, and when the wind had dispelled it, he saw her upon the verge of the precipice again. He now experienced the same feelings of terror as before, and again she dashed off, and again the mist restored her; yet so desperately intent upon destruction did she appear, that she dashed off again and again, but as often as she did so the mist reinstated her almost instantaneously upon the brink. She seemed unhurt; but his apprehensions for her safety were dreadful, and they increased every time she appeared. And thus throughout the night was he tortured, writhing to break his imaginary bonds, but finding himself utterly unable to move an inch towards her whom he panted to save.

In the morning, therefore, he did not feel greatly refreshed; but he rose at the usual

hour, with a vivid recollection of all that he had in imagination seen, and reflected upon each circumstance as gravely as if the whole had in reality occurred. While engaged in these reflections, Amelia watched the peculiar expression of his countenance closely, and while at breakfast said, in a playful manner,

“Who is Isabelle?”

Stanley started at the question, and the blood rushed to his cheeks as he echoed, “Isabelle!”—for he thought it very strange that Amelia should put such a question at such a time, and half suspected that some kind friend had informed her of certain circumstances, of which she might as well have been kept in ignorance. “Isabelle!” he repeated. “What Isabelle?”

“Why, the Isabelle!—the little Isabelle!—the Isabelle whom you so often addressed in your sleep.”

“Oh! I recollect!” cried Stanley, smiling; for he really felt very much relieved. “Isabelle!—I remember!—Of course!—I suppose I must introduce you to little Isabelle. Oh! she is such a beautiful creature, if the vision be faithful.”

“ The vision ? But do you not know her ? ”

“ Know her ! Why, she is to be my second ! The sweetest little dear you ever beheld ! Such eyes !—such hair !—such ankles ! And yet—no—her dress was too long ; I did not see her ankles ; but I am sure they are beautifully turned. And then she loves me so dearly ! Oh ! I must introduce you to my Isabelle ! ”

This Stanley thought very ingenious. Had he pretended not to know her, he conceived he might have done it with sufficient *gaucherie* to excite suspicion ; but, by affecting to know and to admire her, he imagined that the thing would be regarded as a jest. And he was right in his conjecture—as a jest it was regarded ; for the perception of Amelia was so acute, that she felt it to be very unlikely he would make any such acknowledgment if in reality it were so. Whether ladies in general are thus deceived, while priding themselves upon this peculiar acuteness of perception, is a point which has yet to be established ; it will be sufficient here to describe this as being

the effect upon the mind of Amelia, who believed that Isabelle was a mere creature of the imagination, which was precisely the belief that Stanley wished to inspire. Lest, however, any slight feeling of jealousy should linger, he would not allow the matter to rest even here. He explained to her how ardently he loved Isabelle, dwelt upon the beautiful softness of her lips, lauded the luxuriance of her ringlets, described her figure as being sylph-like in the extreme; indeed he depicted so lovely a creature, and declared his passion for her in terms so warm, that Amelia at length thought it an excellent jest, and the subject became one of infinite merriment.

Breakfast, however, was no sooner at an end than Stanley's thoughts assumed a more serious character. He knew not how to act. Isabelle he believed to be a virtuous good girl, and he was therefore most anxious for her safety. And yet, ought he to ascertain her residence and call upon her? Could he as a man, under the circumstances, justify the pursuit of such a course? She loved him — of that he felt firmly convinced; but what

object could he hope to attain by calling? It might increase, but could not diminish, her unhappiness; and what right had he to sport with her feelings? He was bound by every honourable principle to do nothing calculated to augment her wretchedness, and the probability was that neglect would work a cure.

In this strain he argued with himself for some time; and although he felt anxious, most anxious, to ascertain if she were safe, he eventually made up his mind not to call.

## CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH THE WIDOW'S DESIGNS UPON SIR WILLIAM, AND SIR WILLIAM'S DESIGNS UPON STANLEY, ARE DEVELOPED.

THIS being the auspicious day appointed for her party, the widow was excessively busy all the morning; and, as her primary object was to astonish Sir William, everything dazzling in her possession was displayed in a style the most chaste and superb. She scorned, however, to depend upon the display of her wealth solely: her faith in the power of her personal charms was of an extremely high order; and hence, after having arranged the inanimate auxiliaries in the most startling manner, and given the most minute and conflicting instructions to the servants, she proceeded to embellish those personal charms, and perhaps there never was such a job! Everything calculated to add fascination to

nature was put in requisition. The taste of her maid was in each particular instance repudiated. In reality the girl had no taste, and such being the afflicting state of things, the widow of course had it all her own way; and, therefore, when the whole scheme had been accomplished, she certainly did feel, and that strongly, that if in this world any lady ever looked the thing, she did! Characteristically illustrated at each grand point, and jewelled after the fashion she most approved,—“Well, really, now,” she observed, as she accosted herself familiarly, “what can be said against the appearance of Lady Wormwell!”—for, however extraordinary it may appear that she should thus continue to harp upon “Lady Wormwell,” it is a fact that she felt that the title became her, and that she had been formed to do honour to the title.

It was fortunate, perhaps, that foreseeing that she might, on this particular occasion, be at her toilet a little longer than usual, she began to dress early; for no sooner had she taken the lingering look alluded to than Sir



William arrived. It were folly to attempt to disguise from the world that she did at this moment feel fluttered. It was a moment of deep interest, certainly; and yet, why should she be so tremulous? Why should her heart beat so? Why should she thus catch her breath, and turn faint? She sat down to answer these questions composedly; but, as Sir William's arrival was now officially announced, she started up, and took a deep inspiration. All her courage was required, and she promptly summoned all—directed her carriage to be sent for Stanley and Amelia, which she had deferred expressly, in order that she and Sir William might have half an hour's sweet conversation alone—took another smiling glance at her peculiarly graceful person—found matters all right and imposing—and then at once proceeded to receive Sir William, in a style which she felt his heart could not resist. What delight she expressed, what joy she depicted, may be conceived. But how droll were her sensations! She trembled like a foolish little bird! Yet how sweet is the love which a title inspires!—what beautiful feelings it en-

genders ! It is almost as pure and incorruptible as that which is solely created by wealth. Happy widow ! She felt this love deeply ; and hence, although she had a trembling hand, she displayed a sweet smile, and was, moreover, *so* fussy ! Sir William before conceived that she was aiming at something ; but her great design now became palpable. He saw through it all ; but he was not by any means displeased. On the contrary, he took it upon himself to seem flattered, and really enjoyed the thing rather than not ; for although he was unmarried, and, being comparatively poor, had no great contempt for wealth, he had certainly not the most remote idea of entering into anything like a matrimonial alliance with the widow, albeit it must be confessed that few ladies of large dimensions could have looked more unique. But he humoured her fancy, and made her believe that he was not insensible to her charms, because, among other things, he imagined that she might be made useful, under circumstances of a pecuniary nature, the force of which few men knew much better than himself. He therefore entered into the spirit of th-

thing, and listened with great attention to the brilliant discourse of the fascinating widow, who was so extremely communicative, and managed to explain the precise character of her position with so much delicacy and tact, that, by the time the carriage drew up with Stanley and Amelia, he had become, unsolicited, master of the whole matter.

“You kept us waiting long enough, I hope!” cried Stanley, as he entered. “I thought that you were not going to send for us at all.”

“Upon my word I beg pardon, my dear ; but this watch of mine is really a very sad deceiver.”

“Why wear it, then? Why not have one that will keep correct time?”

“Well, well, don’t be angry, my love. I am sorry it happened. It shall not occur again.”

This dialogue, short as it was, discovered to Sir William the true state of the case. He saw Stanley’s influence at a glance, and at the moment conceived a project for enriching himself. This project must, however, be left for the present. It was not then, even in conception, matured ; and, as there was plenty of a tin

time for its execution, he troubled himself no more about it then, but continued to converse on ephemeral topics with Amelia, (who could not help fancying, that when she entered he pressed her hand with rather remarkable warmth,) until dinner was announced.

The dinner passed off very well. It was very *recherché*, and very well managed. Sir William was *Sir* William to his heart's content, and nothing but smiles and good humour prevailed.

A variety of interesting subjects were touched upon slightly; but at length one arose which had reference to the moral tendency of exposing vice. The widow expressed a decided opinion, that virtue alone must be portrayed to induce a high appreciation of virtue; and Sir William, as a matter of courtesy, agreed with her, and contended, that if the vicious were unknown, their example could not be followed, which was certainly much to the point, clear and very conclusive. Stanley, however, was not content with this, and hence inquired of Sir William if he objected to the system of guarding the virtuous against the practices of the vicious.

“Decidedly not,” returned Sir William. “I would guard them at every point, by placing before their eyes, constantly and exclusively, the beautiful characteristics of virtue.”

“Precisely,” observed the widow. “Of all guards, virtue is the strongest.”

“But by simply doing that,” said Stanley, without noticing the widow’s remarkable observation, “I apprehend you would leave them unguarded. The inexperienced must be taught what to abhor, as well as what to admire; what to shun, as well as what to embrace. And the beauty of virtue is never so conspicuous as when contrasted with the deformity of vice.”

“Teach men to be virtuous,” rejoined Sir William, “and they require to know nothing of vice.”

“But how are they to avoid the snares laid for them by the vicious?”

“Experience will soon enable them to do that.”

“But whose experience? Their own, or the experience of others? We cannot be secure in our own experience, and hence to the inexperienced an exposition of vice is a blessing. Our

own experience cannot guide us : we must not be left to it alone. If, for example, a young and lovely creature should fall, ought we not to describe the villainous means by which her fall was accomplished, that others may avoid them ? That young fallen creature was left to her own experience. Had she been permitted to profit by the experience of others, she might still have been virtuous—still pure—still the pride of her home—a blessing to her family—the solace of those whose hearts she may have broken ; but having merely her own experience to guide her, she was ensnared, and her experience must, forsooth, not be imparted to others. No ; they, in turn, must learn by their own experience too ! Society would be wrecked if the virtuous and the honourable were not constantly warned, by the experience of others, against those by whom vice and dishonour are practised. How are we to shun that of which we are unconscious ? How are we to frustrate the designs of the villain, if we are kept in utter ignorance of those designs ? How are the young, however exemplary and amiable, to avoid the specious, deeply-laid schemes of the



seducer, if the arts of seduction are kept out of view? They must be warned; and as they can be effectually warned only by the experience of others, the knowledge of that experience should not be withheld. It is the duty of all, whether in private conversation, in moral disquisitions, or in histories which amuse while they instruct, to portray the deformities of vice, with the view of rendering more apparent the beauties of virtue.

It certainly did not require all this to convince Sir William Wormwell, that if vice were not exposed, our social system would soon be destroyed; but having taken the opposite side, to please the widow, he felt bound to fight her battle until she was perfectly satisfied, when—perceiving his occupation as her champion gone—he observed, with a smile, that he thought Stanley ought to have been in the Church. This acute observation was very much approved by the widow, who began to think so too; while Amelia was delighted with her Stanley, which is not very marvellous, considering how easily affectionate and intelligent wives are by such means charmed by their



husbands. All were therefore well content ; and when Sir William had covered his retreat by observing, that the grand point was to describe the career of the vicious, so that none might either sympathise with them, or wish to follow their example, the conversation turned upon the turf.

“Of course you go to Epsom?” said Sir William.

“I scarcely know,” replied Stanley. I have not even given it a thought.”

“Then you have no favourite horse in the Derby?”

“I don’t even know the name of any one that has been entered. In fact, my knowledge of the turf is exceedingly limited.”

“In that case, I should strongly advise you to bet only with friends.”

“Would it not be as well,” suggested Amelia, “to abstain from betting altogether?”

“Decidedly,” replied Sir William. “But men, from the highest to the lowest, who take the slightest interest in a race, will bet. The impulse is irresistible. If even they have nothing at stake, they cannot avoid wishing that a certain horse may win, and that is suffi-

cient to prompt them to back that wish, if they happen to have any one to bet with. It is, however, folly for the inexperienced to bet with any but friends."

"But when are the races?" inquired the widow.

"Next Wednesday is the grand day."

"Oh, I should like to go dearly! I never was at a race in my life. I am sure I should enjoy it above all things. Shouldn't you, my love?"

"I should indeed," returned Amelia. "Papa took me down last year, and I was *so* much delighted! You can scarcely imagine what a lovely scene it is."

"Well, suppose, then, Stanley were to take us?" said the widow, who, after smiling sweetly at Sir William, added, "you, I presume, are engaged?"

"No; I have no *particular* engagement."

"Oh, it would be so delightful if you would go with us!"

"I assure you that nothing would give me greater pleasure. What say you?" he added, addressing Stanley.

"Oh! *I* am quite agreeable."

“There’s a good creature!” cried Amelia. “We will not be the slightest trouble to you. You can have your own horses down there, as papa and Albert had, and ride about as you please.”

“Exactly,” said the widow. “You can send them forward, and we can all go down together in my carriage. We shall be so comfortable and so happy!”

It was accordingly thus arranged, and the remainder of the evening was spent most agreeably; but the greatest amount of delight was experienced by the widow, who then felt as certain of being Lady Wormwell as if a formal declaration had already been made. This Sir William, of course, perceived, and took especial care to give strength and depth to that feeling, conceiving it to be essential to the due execution of that scheme of which the outline may as well be explained. He saw that Stanley was on the high-road to ruin; that he derived all the means he had of travelling that road from the widow; and that her wealth would be thereby most sensibly diminished, if, indeed, it were not wholly absorbed. He there-

fore put it to himself whether he ought to suffer so golden an opportunity to slip. In a pecuniary sense he was not in a good position; but he felt that he might retrieve himself by a little ingenuity, and the only question was,—Could he do it in the way proposed with honour? It was some time before he could answer this question with any degree of satisfaction to himself; but he did so eventually thus:

“We are the creatures of circumstances; circumstances govern all our actions. Is not therefore non-resistance venial when circumstances surround us in the shape of temptations to acts which in a strict sense partake of the character of dishonour? Besides, the means I propose to employ are means which the world calls “honourable,” and none can be disgraced by the employment of those means in the eye of the world. Why, then, should not I, by those “honourable” means enrich myself? If this fortune is to be lost, why should not I win it? I will: and while doing so defy the world to say that I violated in any single instance its own code of honour.”

By this ingenious species of ratiocination he

tranquillised his conscience, and having laid the basis of success by appearing as amiable as possible in the eyes of the widow, who was in raptures, he left for the night.

END OF VOL. I.















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